

Andreas Whittam Smith starts his new weekly column

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What should you do when your baby cries?

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Damon Hill: down and out in Monaco

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Why the chips are down for computer thieves

Network, 16 page pull-out

THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER Windy with sunshine and showers 40p (IR 45p)

The thief, the Serbian link and the financing of Britain's ruling party

Tories in 'sleaze' row over £500,000 gifts

**DONALD MACINTYRE
COLIN BROWN
and CHRIS BLACKHURST**

The Tory party came under concerted pressure last night to reveal the sources of its funding after it was embroiled in a fresh "sleaze" row over donations totalling £500,000.

Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, ordered an immediate investigation into allegations that Serbian businessmen linked to the Bosnian Serb

nation by Mr Nadir had been fraudulently acquired, was said to have been given to Conservative Central Office three years ago.

The Central Office investigation is into a report in yesterday's *Sunday Times* about two donations, one in 1992 by a British based "Yugoslav" entrepreneur, and one two years later by the businessman who reportedly met Mr Hanley in a London restaurant.

Lawyers acting for a businessman of "Yugoslav birth" last night did not deny a donation to Tory funds by their client but adamantly denied he had any links with the Mr Karadzic, who is wanted on war crimes charges, or anyone in the Bosnian Serb leadership.

Prominent libel lawyers, Peter Carter Ruck, said in a statement: "Our client is a British citizen of Yugoslav birth and has been resident in the UK for over a decade. Our client has been a director of a number of British limited companies in London who have substantial assets in this country."

"Our client is outraged by any suggestion that he is linked in any way to Radovan Karadzic or the Bosnian Serbs."

Robin Cook, Labour's foreign affairs spokesman, said that if true the allegations amounted to "the worst scandal that we have seen in this Parliament".

Meanwhile, senior Tory sources insisted that it still had not been proved that the donation made by Mr Nadir had been of stolen funds. The report drawn up by Christopher Morris, senior partner at Touche Ross, administrators of Mr Nadir's failed company Poly Peck, gave evidence apparently establishing that the £365,000 came from money defrauded by the company. The report added: "The evidence we have



obtained to date shows that a large proportion of the £400,000 donations made to the Conservative Party formed part of Mr Nadir's fraud and/or breach of fiduciary duty and/or breach of trust and/or misfeasance as a director."

The *Independent on Sunday* said that the report accompanied a request for the money back which was refused even though a month earlier Sir Norman Fowler, then the party chairman, had told the Commons that if Touche Ross provided proof that the money was stolen it would be returned.

A senior party source pointed out last night that the Con-

servative Party was not alone as recipients of Mr Nadir's largess and that a number of charities had received donations.

It has become clear that Tory donors are hiding their support for the party by making non-returnable interest free "loans" instead of giving straight cash payments.

Central Office sources have confirmed that corporate donors are now being canvassed to make loans if they feel worried about being publicly revealed as Tory backers. While a cash payment should be declared as a political donation in company accounts, a loan can be kept secret. A City accountant said

it was easy for a company to hide a loan in the "creditors" section of its accounts. In the future, when it was not repaid, it would be written off as a bad debt.

The party has received at least £10m over the past 12 months, party insiders confirmed last night. That has enabled Mr Mawhinney to wipe out the overdraft which he announced in March stood at £2.5m. The party is believed to have about a £1m surplus.

Labour leaders said last night they would legislate to force the Tory party to reveal the identities of large donors. Frank Dobson said: "We suspect that

a large amount of this money is coming from Hong Kong businessmen. There have also been stories that it may have come from China. The public have a right to know."

Tory sources said last night that the bulk of the donations were in £10,000 or £15,000 cheques from individual businessmen. "The story speaks for itself. They don't want to see a Labour Government," said one.

The CBI President Sir Col in Marshall yesterday unexpectedly fuelled the row by declaring it was not "appropriate" for companies to make donations to party funds.

Leading article, page 13

Novel mystery: After a year in the basement, has a bookseller find two lost works?

Miles away from the real Bronte

PAUL FIELD

As brand names go it has hard to beat Bronte. Like Sony, Heinz and BMW, it is short, instantly recognisable and known the world over. And this weekend we had another example of just how powerful brand names are these days.

First, find a little known Victorian novel, written by a doughty, independent feminist, prefabricated covered in dust on some shelves in the darkest recesses of an antiquarian book store. Second, claim that textual analysis by computer shows the style to be that of Charlotte Bronte. Third, watch obscure, little-read novel transformed into best-seller by virtue of authorship. Fourth, start leafing through the nearest phone book for the number which most resembles the sum you hope to earn from the discovery.

In the media age, when books go on to become audio cassettes, television serials and films, discovering a lost masterpiece - or a lost mistresspiece - in your attic is like striking oil in your back garden.

Except that Ian King doesn't really look as if he is interested in money. From what can see of his face, he looks rather pale. That is because the heavily bearded, antiquarian bookseller from Edinburgh has just emerged from a year in the basement of his shop engaged in a literary equivalent of an undercover mission, secretly piecing together clues to prove that Charlotte Bronte was



Charlotte Bronte...



...and not Charlotte Bronte

indeed the author of two volumes he had found.

Mr King stumbled over *Sad Times*, a tract about the Ludlows, in a bagful of books brought to his shop by a customer. *Miss Miles*, a novel dealing with hard times in the Yorkshire woollen industry before the Reform Act of 1832, attributed to the doughty Marty Taylor, was discovered in the National Library of Scotland where it was deposited in 1890.

If his findings are accepted, it will be a publishing sensation, worth perhaps millions of pounds, to literary agents, publishers and, quite possibly, Mr King himself.

Sadly, for Bronte lovers everywhere, it might be too soon to start celebrating. Scholars who have read *Miss Miles* say attributing it to the author of Jane Eyre would be a grave disservice. The novel could not possibly be her work. Yes, there are references to disgreagables and porridges, nuances characteristic of Bronte in Shirley. Yes, it might be the feminist novel Bronte yearned but was unable to write.

But no, the style is not hers. It lacks the emotional power of her four known novels. And the experts point out that one does not have to descend into the vaults of the Scottish Library to discover *Miss Miles*. It was last reprinted by Oxford University Press in 1990 and is well known to Bronte scholars. Lynne Gordon, whose biography of Bronte, *A Passionate Life*, was published in 1994, says: "It would never have occurred to me that *Miss Miles* was by Charlotte Bronte. I think Mr King is deluding himself."

But Ms Gordon, who has studied the correspondence between the two women, suggests overlaps are inevitable. Their close friendship explains everything. If it isn't Charlotte then for you, Mary Taylor, hitherto obscure Victorian novelist, opportunity knocks.

women while Charlotte Bronte explores the hidden lives of women and goes for the deeper portraits.

The heroine, Sarah, is the daughter of a shopkeeper, yearning to discover what it takes to be a lady. She is disgusted by what she sees of bourgeois life. The lives of the other protagonists, Dora and Maria, reveal the constricted options open to 19th century women of all classes. The novel is marked by its uncompromising feminism, not something usually associated with Bronte.

But Mr King claims it is the novel she always wanted to write. "I think that Charlotte Bronte probably knew when she was writing it that it would not be published for some time," he explains. To account for how it came to be wrongly attributed, he speculates that the manuscript was stolen shortly after her death in 1855.

This, too, Ms Gordon, dismisses as pure supposition. "There was an exchange in the 1850s when Mary Taylor told Charlotte Bronte she was writing a novel, the description of which matches the content of *Miss Miles*. A simple explanation for holding onto it until 1890 was that it was only then that feminist novels were being published."

But whoever wrote *Sad Times*, the winner from the affair is likely to be a feminist heroine. If it isn't Charlotte then for you, Mary Taylor, hitherto obscure Victorian novelist, opportunity knocks.

QUICKLY

Making stacks

Heavy demand for shares in Railtrack sparked a political row last night, with Labour claiming the Government had sold the network off on the cheap. The shares, priced at 390p yesterday, start trading this morning with an immediate profit for investors expected. Page 18

Boot for Cantona

Eric Cantona, English football's Player of the Year, and Newcastle's David Ginola were both omitted from the French squad for next month's European Championship.

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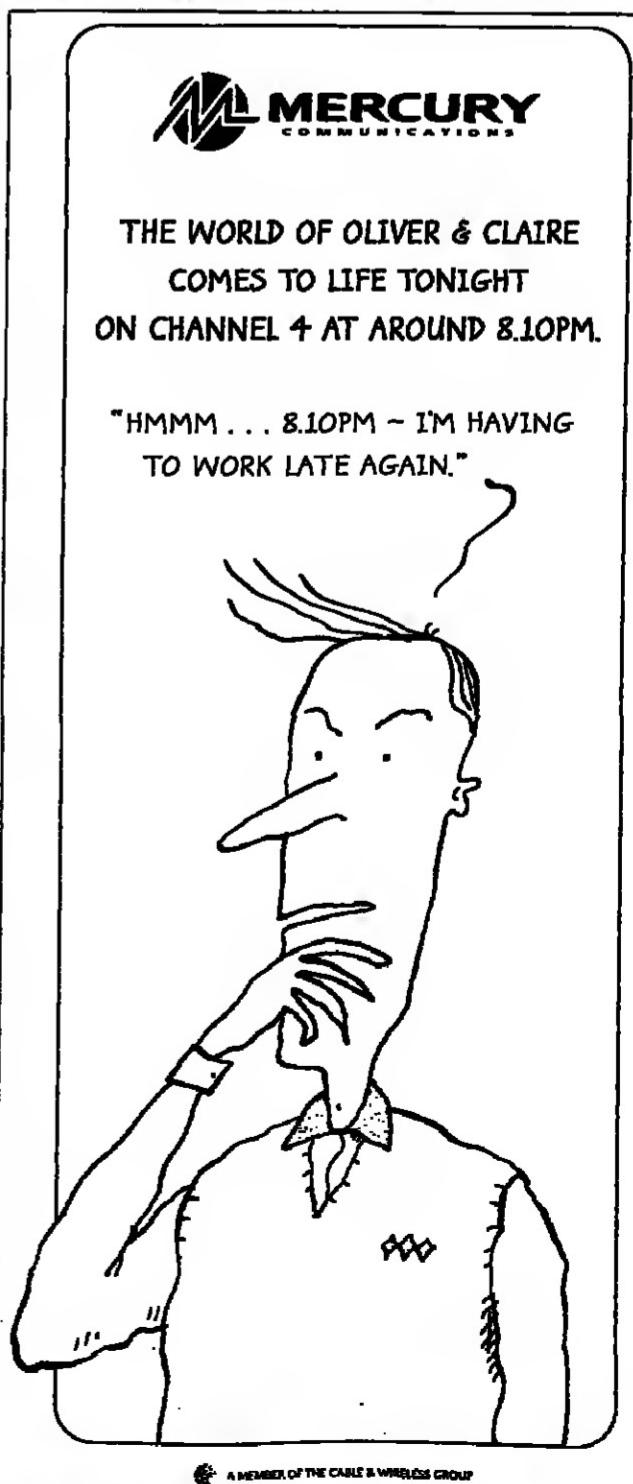
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news

UK threatens treaty over beef

The Government is threatening to block ratification of a key European treaty setting up Europol, the embryo European police force, unless progress is made on lifting the beef ban.

The threat, formulated by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, is the first concrete sign that the Government will retaliate directly against its European partners. According to senior Whitehall sources, the plan to block Europol has been agreed by the Government in recent days following the growing anger at the refusal of other EU member states to agree to any easing of the blockade.

News that the Government is proposing the action has

emerged as Europe's standing veterinary committee meets again today to consider whether to ease the ban on three beef products: gelatine, tallow and semen. The committee failed to agree to the partial lifting of the ban at a meeting in Brussels last Wednesday, when Germany led calls for keeping every element of the blockade in place.

The Government has so far insisted it will do nothing illegal to disrupt European business. However, the decision to focus retaliatory action on the Europol negotiations is carefully calculated to bring maximum

pressure on Europe, and particularly the Germans. Germany has made the setting up of Europol – a police co-operation network – as a major priority in the fight against international crime and drug trafficking. Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, spoke last week of the urgent need to agree the Europol treaty.

Targeting Europol also allows Mr Howard to raise further criticisms of the European Court of Justice, which he attacked last week, calling for a reduction in the court's powers. The jurisdiction of the court over Eu-

ropol has long been a British objection to the treaty.

For many European member states, the establishment of Europol is envisaged as one of the most positive policies currently on the Brussels books, as it would prove to European citizens that member states are protecting their interests. A Europol computer already exists in the Hague to allow information sharing. Under the new treaty, Europe's forces would be given new cross-border ties although no European force is envisaged as yet.

The convention was signed at

the Cannes summit in June last year, but Britain then refused to endorse the proposal to bring Europol under the European Court's jurisdiction. Other member states argued that it was essential that the powers of the new policing network should be monitored and controlled by the Luxembourg Court. But Britain saw it as an extension of the court's powers.

A deadline of a year was then set for member states to resolve this disagreement and agree terms on which they could all ratify the convention. Conventions must be ratified in each

parliament before they can come into force.

Before the beef crisis arose, it is understood that a compromise formula was under discussion whereby Britain would agree to opt out of the section of the convention giving powers to the European Court. By agreeing to the opt-out, it would allow the other member states to go ahead.

According to Whitehall

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Police launched a murder inquiry yesterday after a man was stabbed to death in front of his girlfriend during a "road rage" attack on the M25.

An argument broke out between the driver of a Bedford van and a man driving a Land-Rover after both vehicles pulled up along a slip road at Junction 3, near Swanley, in Kent, yesterday lunchtime. The van driver was stabbed and then the Land-Rover driver, described as white and in his fifties, drove off in the direction of the Dartford Tunnel.

The victim, who has not been named, but who is believed to be from the London area, was taken to West Hill Hospital, Dartford, but doctors were unable to save him. It is believed that he managed to give a brief description of the attacker and the registration number of the Land-Rover before he died with his girlfriend at his bedside.

Although the junction had security cameras in place, they were not in operation at the time of the incident. Kent police are appealing for witnesses. *Ros Wynne-Jones*

Britain will be urging an end to summer ozone smogs by 2005 at a meeting of environment ministers from eight European countries which starts in London today.

John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, who is their host, wants them to agree on a target for cutting pollution levels to a point where the eye-itching, lung-damaging photochemical smogs no longer occur during hot, still weather in Europe.

The pollutants come from road traffic, industry and power stations. A complex cycle of chemical reactions driven by intense sunlight leads to the formation of high levels of ozone, which affects some asthmatics and people with other chest problems.

Sometimes half or more of these pollutants originate in continental Europe and drift across the North Sea and the Channel into southern Britain – a phenomenon which the Sun newspaper calls "Frog smog". That is why nations have got together to tackle the problem.

But UN officials concede that British smogs are largely home-grown and sometimes this pollution adds to ozone episodes in Europe. *Nicholas Schoon*

Sea teenagers were found last night after going missing for 24 hours during the Ten Tors expedition on Dartmoor. Hundreds of young people were rescued by helicopter yesterday after the expedition was abandoned because of snow and temperatures reduced to sub-zero by wind chill.

The Dartmoor Rescue Group, two Sea King helicopters, a Gazelle helicopter and Army personnel were drafted in to help with a search for 400 teams of six people.

The six walkers, from Bideford College, Devon, had last been seen when they stopped after a day's walking at about 7.30pm on Saturday night. They are aged between 16 and 17 and returned to base camp shortly before 8pm.

It is the first time in a decade that the Ten Tors expedition has been abandoned. The event director, Brigadier John Powell, commander of 43 (Wessex) Brigade, said if the expedition had not been called off lives would have been put at risk.

Last night a spokesman for the event said that a number of walkers were being treated for minor injuries, including "sprained ankles" and "mild hypothermia". Two more serious cases of hypothermia were being treated at Dartmoor hospital in Plymouth.

Around 400 youngsters were still on the moor as night fell. Earlier in the evening a second team of walkers from Truro College were also on the emergency list, but they turned out to be safe and "drinking tea back at base without having signed in", said the spokeswoman. *Ros Wynne-Jones*

Conservative Central Office pressured the Reigate constituency association to delay for as long as possible a crucial meeting of its executive to decide whether to continue to support Sir George Gardner as their local MP.

Last Friday, the executive voted 15-14 against endorsing Sir George and his future will now be put to a special meeting of the whole, 1,200-strong Surrey-based association at the end of June. If he loses, Sir George has threatened to apply for the Chiltern Hundreds – parliamentary shorthand for resigning his seat – and to force a by-election.

Fearful of the danger that threat would pose to their narrow constituency, Central Office was arguing as long ago as last November, the *Independent* has learned, for the executive to meet much earlier this year, so that if Sir George did lose, a by-election would be made impracticable by the proximity to the general election.

A senior Reigate constituency official said that last November, "George had been saying should he be deselected, he would reconsider his position and let it be known privately that meant the Chiltern Hundreds."

Central Office got to hear of his stance and the local constituency building towards him. Since last November, said the senior Reigate Tory, Dr Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman, had been trying to persuade the executive to take it in time and not to rush into anything. "Dr Mawhinney was trying to delay the selection issue until such time as the re-selection of George couldn't threaten the Government with the Chiltern Hundreds and there would be no time before the general election," said the senior Reigate member.

So concerned was Central Office with the crisis in Reigate, that both Dr Mawhinney and Malcolm Rifkind, the foreign secretary, have been to the constituency to make strong speeches in defence of Sir George. *Chris Blackhurst*

British men are the least popular choice of lover for Europeans, according to a survey published today.

Based on the views of 10,000 men and women in 15 countries, the survey by Durex, the condom manufacturers, is a study of European attitudes to sexual behaviour.

The British are the most caring of Europe's lovers, the survey found. Almost half (47 per cent) regard their partner's feelings during sex as a top priority – compared with 22 per cent of Germans and 36 per cent of Spanish people questioned.

British people also lose their virginity at a younger age than their European counterparts. World-wide, 16-year-olds emerged as even more considerate, with 50 per cent saying their lover's satisfaction was of premium importance.

Americans start their sex-lives earliest and are most sexually active, having sex 135 times a year against a global average of 109. The least active are the Thais at 64 times a year. Spaniards at 71 times. *Ros Wynne-Jones*

The Government plans to allow schools to exclude children for up to 45 days at a time, instead of the present 15 days. Ministers hope the move, part of a package of legislation intended to deal with disruptive children, will halt the inexorable rise in permanent expulsions, now more than 70,000 a year.

Schools say part of the reason for the increase is the removal of their power to exclude disruptive children for indefinite periods.

Excluding children for just 15 days, they say, does not allow enough time for the cause of their disruptive behaviour to be addressed. Extending temporary exclusions was signalled as an option last month by Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education. *PA*

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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Hostages tell of deadly jungle ordeal

JOJO MOYES

Sitting in their baggy clothes, pale and subdued at 7am on Sunday, they could have been four students feeling the effects of a good night out.

Only their shadowed, watchful eyes gave any clue that, for Daniel Start, William Oates, Annette van der Kolk and Anna McIvor, yesterday marked, instead, the end of a four-month kidnapping ordeal, which saw two of their friends brutally murdered and – it emerged yesterday – came within minutes of costing them their own lives.

Foreign Office minister Jeremy Hanley revealed that following an earlier failed release attempt, the Government believed the British hostages' lives were hanging in the balance.

"They came very close to being killed once negotiations had broken down. There is no doubt that when they were rescued, it was not before time," Mr Hanley said.

The four Cambridge graduates' 129-day ordeal finally ended shortly after 6am yesterday when flight BA34 from Jakarta brought the British members of the original team of 11 young scientists back to Heathrow.

Escorted by Mr Hanley, Foreign Office officials and police, they conducted a brief reunion with their parents in a private room in Terminal One before meeting the press.

Looking pale and thin under the television lights, Annette van der Kolk, 21, and 20-year-old Anna McIvor – who witnessed the murders of their Indonesian friends – chose not to speak. None of the four has yet spoken extensively of the experience.



Back home: The four Britons – (from left) Anna McIvor, Annette van der Kolk, William Oates, and Daniel Start, accompanied by the Foreign Office minister Jeremy Hanley – meeting the press at Heathrow after flying into Britain from Indonesia yesterday

Photograph: Edward Sykes

ences, which are reported to have included malaria, sexual harassment, and deep depression.

Mr Oates, 22, and Mr Start, 21, who spoke for all of them, said they were shattered from their experiences but were delighted to be back among family and friends.

There was something touchingly self-effacing and restrained in the two men's statements, in which they joked lightly and friends.

"We all went back to the forest in tears. From then on there was no option but for the military to come in," Mr Start said.

In the subsequent shoot-out last Wednesday, when Indonesian troops stormed the separatists' stronghold in the isolated Irian Jaya province, two Indonesian hostages lost their

lives. Witnessed by Ms McIvor, they were hacked to death by the rebels as they clashed with government forces during the rescue.

"We are hurt and in deep shock and sadness at the very tragic and vividly brutal death of our companions," Mr Start said.

Mr Oates touched upon the isolation felt by the four Britons and their Dutch and Indonesian friends, who made up the expedition of young scientists, during his captivity.

"We spent a long time sitting in that forest thinking about the things we missed," he said. They had all been "very, very lonely" but had been heartened by thinking of the people outside.

It's great to be reunited

with our families. It was their memories that kept us strong. It's a real culture shock after half a year literally in the Stone Age," Mr Start added.

Pleasure over their safe return was tempered, however, by the increasing pessimism over the fate of the two Britons – Paul Wells and Keith Mangan – who have been missing in East Timor since being kidnapped by rebel separatists last July.

Mr Hanley admitted yesterday that there had been "no proof of life" since August.

He insisted that the Foreign Office "hadn't given up hope" but said that it was seriously investigating reports that they may have been murdered last year.

It's great to be reunited

with our families. It was their memories that kept us strong. It's a real culture shock after half a year literally in the Stone Age," Mr Start added.

Paul Merton reads his own story...

the whole story (completely unabridged) for the first time in his own inimitable style.

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But does he really know him?

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The other

Oxfam challenges high street on exploitation

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Oxfam is introducing a new concept of "serious shopping" today. Everyone is being asked to ensure that their latest little extravagance or essential was not made with the sweat and blood of exploited workers around the world.

The charity is encouraging shoppers to employ consumer power and ask high-street stores where their clothes are made

and, crucially, how workers' rights and safety are guaranteed. Research shows that "rag trade" workers - mainly women - suffer some of the worst conditions and abuses, which often lead to poor health. In return for long hours, no job security, intimidation and harassment, many workers remain trapped in poverty as pay too low to meet basic needs.

From Guatemala to Pakistan, Bangladesh to the Philippines, surveys found overcrowded,

noisy, hot, dark and dirty factories. According to Oxfam, workers are sacked and laid off without notice, time off is rarely allowed even for illness, overtime is compulsory and work-related health problems - such as eyestrain, headaches, chest and back pain, respiratory problems and skin infections - are universal. In many countries where there is extreme poverty, children are forced to work in factories.

Oxfam claims that the drive

for cheaper production and shorter delivery times has encouraged human rights abuses of factory workers, and of those who do piece-work at home.

"Their treatment by the garment industry is an affront to their human dignity and an infringement of their basic rights," says its report published today.

It says that the power to improve working conditions for the millions employed in the industry rests with the high-street

shops. Oxfam says many have little first-hand knowledge about conditions in the factories supplying their goods. Complex supply chains involving several manufacturers on the way to the stores have allowed exploitation and abuse to go unchecked.

Today, it is calling upon five of Britain's top high-street retailers - Burton's, C&A, Marks & Spencer, Next and Sears - to say where and under what conditions their garments are made. Oxfam is not accusing any

companies of using sweatshop labour, only asking them to prove that they have sufficient safeguards in place to ensure that they are not. All five (and some others) were approached by the *Independent* and all were confident that their practices ensured their factories were sound although not all carried out independent inspections.

Oxfam accepts that many leading retailers are taking steps to guard against exploitation, but says they need to do more.

Its campaign comes hard on the heels of that of another charity, Christian Aid, which recently revealed worker exploitation in the lucrative training-shoes trade.

Oxfam is also calling for independent monitoring of suppliers, as well as stronger international trade and labour regulations to improve the lot of the garment makers.

The charity is, however, anxious that its campaign does not precipitate a boycott or any hasty action from retailers that could lead to factories closing down altogether or to children - who often support poor families - being thrown out of work. They say that would damage those working in the industry even more.

"Ending child labour requires a long-term strategy aimed at eradicating the conditions of poverty and inadequate employment opportunities for adults which make it necessary," the report concludes.

Purchasing policies under the spotlight

HEATHER MILLS

The *Independent* put the "Oxfam challenge" to some key retailers, asking where they bought their merchandise and what safeguards they had in place to guarantee workers' rights, health and conditions.

Gap buys worldwide.

It says all factories undergo strict screening to ensure the fair treatment of workers and they are then subject to regular unannounced checks. It employs two senior staff, working full time on human rights, and implements a strict buying code which guarantees rights and conditions.

"We expect workers to be treated with dignity and justice. Anything less than that is totally unacceptable," said Jim Lukaszewski, a spokesman for the company.

Sears - which owns Selfridges, Miss Selfridge, Richards, Wallis and Warehouse - buys from all over the world.

It says it ensures its suppliers comply with local laws and regulations guaranteeing working conditions and health and safety.

"Sears is committed to the goal that goods are sourced from suppliers which comply with local laws and maintain appropriate standards," said a spokeswoman.

Monsoon buys predominantly from the UK, Europe and the Far East.

The company says all suppliers are required to adhere to its company's code of conduct, guaranteeing workers' rights and conditions as well as quality.

In addition, the firm points out that its suppliers are regularly visited by UK and overseas staff.

"Monsoon is a responsible retailer which takes very seri-

How well do our best-known retail brands stack up in terms of workers rights?

ously its role in developing good supplier practice," said a spokesman.

Next buys worldwide.

It says its code of conduct states the company will not deal with suppliers who knowingly compromise the rights of their workforce. They ensure factories are safe, that no child labour is used and production methods are guaranteed.

The Burton group buys worldwide - about one third from the UK.

It says it employs a strict code of conduct which covers workers' wages and entitlements, health and safety, and outlaws forced labour and child labour. Buyers and management visit factories regularly and it will not deal again with any supplier found to be in breach of the code.

We take the issue of workers' rights and conditions very seriously. We are also part of the British Retail Consortium, which is actively promoting higher standards throughout the industry," said a spokesman.

Harrods buys worldwide.

It says that only a very small percentage of its clothing is manufactured specifically for Harrods and it looks to its manufacturers to ensure their business practices are "beyond reproach".

"Harrods would look very poorly upon suppliers who were found to be exploiting their workforces.

"We would welcome and support any initiative which reduces the suffering and hardship

caused by unscrupulous employment practices," said a spokesman.

C&A buys from factories all over the world.

The company has spent the last two years setting up a new auditing company - independent of the rest of the group - whose purpose is to detect and prevent exploitation.

Those factories which refuse unannounced inspections or are found to be employing children, running sweat-shops or breaching basic civil and workers' rights, will lose their contracts as a result.

John Greene, head of corporate affairs, said: "We do not want to be part of the problem and we are taking strong action to ensure that we are not. That of course does not address the underlying complex issues - but we do not have a choice, we cannot be seen to be part of the problem."

Marks & Spencer buys 77 per cent of its products from manufacturers in the UK, 11.5 percent from Western Europe and 11.5 per cent from the developing world.

The company says that "every single factory" used by Marks & Spencer has been visited by a representative who checks on health and safety and working conditions.

Although individual salaries are not monitored, the company ensures pay at the factories "compares well" with local conditions. It is using ITV's *World in Action* programme over claims made about child labour.

Andrew Stone, joint managing director, said: "Our whole mission has been to ensure the best treatment of everybody connected with Marks & Spencer, from managers and shop staff to customers - and those who make our goods. It is a tradition of which we are proud and which goes back 112 years."



Hard labour: Children drying cloth in Jaipur, India

Photograph: Jeremy Hutton-Sutton

A westerner might look upon the dry lanes of Govindpuri, thrumming with the sound of a thousand sewing machines stitching up the new summer clothes for Britain's shops, as Asia exploitation at its worst.

But Mohammed Hassan - a young tailor who is bent over his machine from 7am to midnight earning around £75 a month - sees it differently. He came to Govindpuri, a slum outside Delhi, from his village in Bihar. It is a wretched place in northern India, cursed by droughts and where landowners raise private armies to keep their peasants in medieval servitude.

"The earth had grown too hard to plow. I have eight in my family to feed, and the most that I could earn working other man's land in my village was 800 rupees (£14 a month)," said Mohammed, one of 25 tailors in sweaty undershirts lined up rows behind sewing machines.

In Govindpuri, Mohammed's life may seem, in a westerner's eyes, to be a pit of misery. But compared to what he has escaped from in Bihar, stitching for 17 hours a day allows him a glimmer of optimism.

Oxfam's campaign to improve working conditions for millions of garment workers around the world by putting pressure on the High Street retailers may be well-intended - but as difficult to define as it is to enforce. By British labour standards, Mohammed is little better than a slave. Yet in Indian standards, he is doing well. He has lifted himself out of poverty and saved his family from starvation. Many in Bihar envy him.

In Govindpuri, nobody forces Mohammed to work. He is paid by the piece, so the more he sews, the more money he can send back to his grateful family.

Tim McGirk in Govindpuri reports on life and work in a sweatshop

Lately, he has been stitching pea-green shorts that women in Europe will be wearing on the beach. It is an article of clothing so outside Mohammed's cultural realm to be outlandish; his wife would be stoned by mobs if she wore British High Street chic in Bihar.

C&A, Next, French Connection, Monsoon, Burton, Littlewoods, Harrods and other UK retailers buy garments made in Govindpuri. The British firms can, and sometimes do, ensure that working and safety conditions are adequate in the bigger factories they use throughout Asia. India has strong, garment workers unions.

Sitting at his desk behind portraits of Lenin and Ganesha, the Hindu elephant-god, a union boss explained that many export garment factories comply with the government's safety code and pay the minimum wage of £36 minimum a month, for an eight hour day, with Sunday off.

But neither the Indian unions - nor the UK clothing buyers - have any way to monitor conditions in Govindpuri's estimated 2,000 little sewing shops. The big factories cannot handle the huge demand from the US and Europe, so they contract out to shops in the labyrinth of Govindpuri's back alleys.

Meenakshi Mehta, a social researcher, said: "It's not that easy to pass judgement on what are admittedly pretty bad conditions here. But if England stops buying these clothes from India, it will mean that these tailors will be worse off. They'll lose their jobs."

Shares inquiry targets City firm

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

One of the City's most respected and powerful stockbroking firms has been drawn into the long-running official investigation into suspected insider dealing in the shares of Anglia TV, which began in February 1994 with the inquiry into trading by Gerry Archer, the best-selling novelist and former Tory Party deputy chairman.

Senior former directors of Smith New Court, including one who worked on the lid for Anglia by MAI, the media group headed by Labour peer Lord Hollick, have now been interviewed by the Department of Trade and Industry inspectors.

Sir Michael Richardson, Smith New Court's former head, who now works for Hamblin Magin, the specialist corporate finance adviser, said: "I can't talk, because everybody at Smith New Court has had their lips sealed. An undertaking not to say anything was given - in no way can it be broken."

The *Independent* has learned that far from being over, as was widely supposed, the inquiry is still going strong. So far, the inspectors have spent a total of 17 months investigating the market in Anglia shares.

The investigation, which shows no sign of being immediately wound-up, has cost the taxpayer hundreds of thousands of pounds in fees. The inspectors, Hugh Aldous, an

accountant, and Roger Kaye QC, were initially appointed by Michael Heseltine, President of the Board of Trade, to probe the dealings of Lord Archer. That first inquiry ended in July 1994, with a decision to take no action against the Tory life peer.

However, in May last year, Mr Heseltine ordered the inspectors to take another look into Anglia share activity ahead of the company's takeover by MAI in January 1994. He had received evidence that Karen Morgan-Thomas, a former stockbroker and a friend of Lord Archer's, had made £20,000 from Anglia shares.

Smith New Court has since merged with Merrill Lynch, the giant US investment bank. But in January 1994, it was advising

Celtic melody haunts the Irish

ALAN MURDOCH
Dublin

It is the great tragedy of the Irish nation that in all of modern Europe, nobody hates them. And so, again, they have won the Eurovision song contest. The Brits, Slovaks, Turks, Germans, and the rest have someone who will dig them out of a hole with those sweet words, "mild points". Not so the loveable Irish, with their stack of 12s.

Gloom-laden Dublin newspapers on Saturday all correctly predicted the disaster ahead. The *Irish Times* headline read: "Ominous signs of Irish song contest win", pointing the way to its fourth victory in five years - and thus traditionally another year as host.

The rest of Europe, according to earlier reports from Oslo, may well be comprising to keep the contest in Ireland permanently. Continental regulars apparently revel in annual trips to Dublin, saying last week that Ireland has the edge in parties and night-life over such restrained venues as Oslo.

Even the largest television companies are feeling squeezed by the satellite invasion, and foot the £43m (£3.12m) bill for Eurovision effectively kills off quality domestically produced drama on Irish television. Not surprisingly, faced with another year of long winter evenings watching repeats of *Taxi* and other United States small-screen antiques, the Irish viewing public are restless.

Liam Miller, director of television programming for Radio Telefis Eireann (RTE) signalled as much in his less-than-rapturous response to the win. In the stoically miserable tones of someone just told he is buying a round of drinks for 100 people, he declined to confirm that next year's event would be held in Ireland.

"It's another challenge to us. It's one we're going to have to consider very carefully," he said cautiously, adding it would be two weeks before a decision was made.

He will also be aware that the one good economic reason for winning - the chance to run a two-hour holiday promotion - now looks hollow. The tourist industry is now overheating.

With hotels in prime locations from Dublin to Killarney booked solid for months ahead.

RTE faces vocal pressure at home, with the press hammering its feature output, citing an epidemic of bland phone-in and studio-based shows. What stings most is that these attacks come from some formerly among its major talents, such as Gerry Studds, theatre producer, film director and one-time satirical thorn in the sides of the country's politicians.

Ireland's other problem is that even its amateurs are better than the rest of Europe's professionals, so when a mere second-year student such as Eimear Quinn takes to the stage she romps home 48 points ahead of the field.

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news

Three killed in Belfast shooting

DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

Three people died in a Belfast shooting incident at the weekend when an off-duty member of the security forces shot two men and then turned the gun on himself during a domestic row.

The man first shot and seriously injured the mother of his four-month-old twins in the early hours of Sunday. He then killed two men who were with her in her north Belfast home before shooting himself dead.

Last night the woman, Gina Blair, a mother of four young children, was described as seriously ill but stable in a Belfast hospital. She was shot in the face in the incident.

The gunman, a full-time member of the Royal Irish Regiment, was the father of the twins, but the couple lived apart. The chain of events began on Saturday night when the couple met in a local club and had a row.

He was ejected from the club and Ms Blair later went home with a female friend and two men whom they had met at the club. Already in the house were Ms Blair's brother and his girlfriend, who had been baby-sitting, while the four children - the twin girls and two boys, one and two - were upstairs asleep.

In the early hours of Sunday morning it appears that the RIR man telephoned the house and threatened to kill everyone in it. At this point police were called to the house. They spent half an hour talking to those inside, then left to try to trace the RIR soldier.

A complicating factor arose at this stage when a mob of around 30 loyalist youths from the Tiger Bay district burst through the peace-line and attacked homes and cars owned by Catholics nearby. Windows in houses and cars were smashed.

About 20 minutes after the police had left Ms Blair's home there, kicking open a door and shooting her in the face. Apparently believing that she was dead, he then shot the two men dead before killing himself. The other adults in the house were unharmed, and the children upstairs were uninjured.

A relative of Ms Blair's said: "They seemed to be getting on OK, but he had been on the telephone threatening to shoot her. Nobody can take it in. There might have been far more dead. He must have gone crazy. He kicked the door in and that was that. It's a nightmare."

One neighbour said that police could have done more to avert the tragedy, but the relative said: "There is no point in blaming the police. They did what they had to do, but somehow at the back of your mind you wonder if there was nothing else which might have stopped this."

Sharon Remwick, 33, a neighbour, said: "Everybody is stunned, just dazed. The girl was devoted to her children. She doted on them."

"She moved in just before Easter ... We knew the boyfriend didn't live there, but he called every so often. She kept herself to herself. It's such a shame, and you have to feel for the poor children."

The Royal Ulster Constabulary said yesterday: "After spending more than half-an-hour with the occupant, and having given her specific advice, the officers returned to the station and took immediate steps to try and trace the man and to make other inquiries."

"The man was not at the house at any stage when the police were present. Inquiries were still under way when he arrived at the home with the tragic results we all now know."



Reunited: Nerfisa Kadric with two of her children, Elvin and Elvis

Photograph: Justin Sibley/Guzelian

Briton jailed after reuniting Bosnians

PATRICIA WYNNE DAVIES
Legal Affairs Editor

A humanitarian mission to reunite Bosnian family in the United Kingdom has ended in what is believed to be an unprecedented nine-month jail term for a British man.

Barrie Goforth, 49, who had previously helped Bosnian Muslims to seek refuge in Britain, was stopped by immigration at Dover in November after taking a hire car to eastern Germany to reunite Nerfisa Kadric and her 11-year-old daughter, Elvis, with her husband and two elder sons, who have been living here for three years.

Mrs Kadric, who is living in Hull with the three children but speaks no English, is believed to have tried to return to her home town of Zvornik, now in Serbia, but was driven back.

Her husband, Ibro, came to England with their two sons, Elvis and Emir, in 1992 with a group bound for Scarborough, North Yorkshire. He later moved to Hull where a Bosnian community had become established and was put in touch with the Goforths last May after unsuccessful attempts to raise the family's plight through official channels.

facilitating the entry of illegal immigrants a fortnight ago.

His wife, Katherine, said: "We had seen the newsreels, we had seen what was happening, the ethnic cleansing against the Muslims. It seemed like Hitler and the Jews all over again. We decided to do something."

Mrs Goforth said: "We had seen the newsreels, we had seen what was happening, the ethnic cleansing against the Muslims. It seemed like Hitler and the Jews all over again. We decided to do something."

Mrs Goforth said that, on the earlier occasions, immigration had been warned and had provided temporary documents.

But a visa requirement has since been introduced.

She insisted that her husband had contact only through telephone calls that left the children in tears.

The affair has since been further complicated by the separation of the Bosnian couple, leaving Mrs Kadric to care for the children alone.

Low-pay bosses 'get tax subsidy'

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

There are now twice as many low-paid breadwinners claiming family credit to support their children than there were five years ago, according to a Labour Party analysis of official figures.

During that period, there was a £21 increase in average weekly payments - £15 more than the amount needed to keep pace with inflation.

The figures reveal the increasing extent to which taxpayers are forced to subsidise some employers who are maximising profits by minimising wages, according to Ian McCartney, Labour's employment spokesman.

Family credit has cost £6.3bn over the past six years, or £250 for every one of Britain's 25m taxpayers, Mr McCartney was told in a parliamentary answer by the Department of Social Security.

Mr McCartney said the bill had rocketed by 34 per cent in five years and was set to increase to more than £2bn a year. He pointed out that it came on top of the estimated £500m paid out in other benefits, including help with housing and council tax payments as a consequence of low pay.

Mr McCartney said the figures demonstrated the need for a national minimum wage which Labour was committed to introduce.

"It is typical of the Tories that they oppose a national minimum wage to stop the exploitation of low-paid workers and the taxpayer by some cowboy employers, while defending the fat-cat utility bosses who earn more in one hour than thousands of people earn in six months."

Average weekly family credit payments rose from £30 in 1990-91 to £51 in 1995-96 - an increase of almost 70 per cent. Over the same period, inflation increased by 19.5 per cent, Mr McCartney pointed out.

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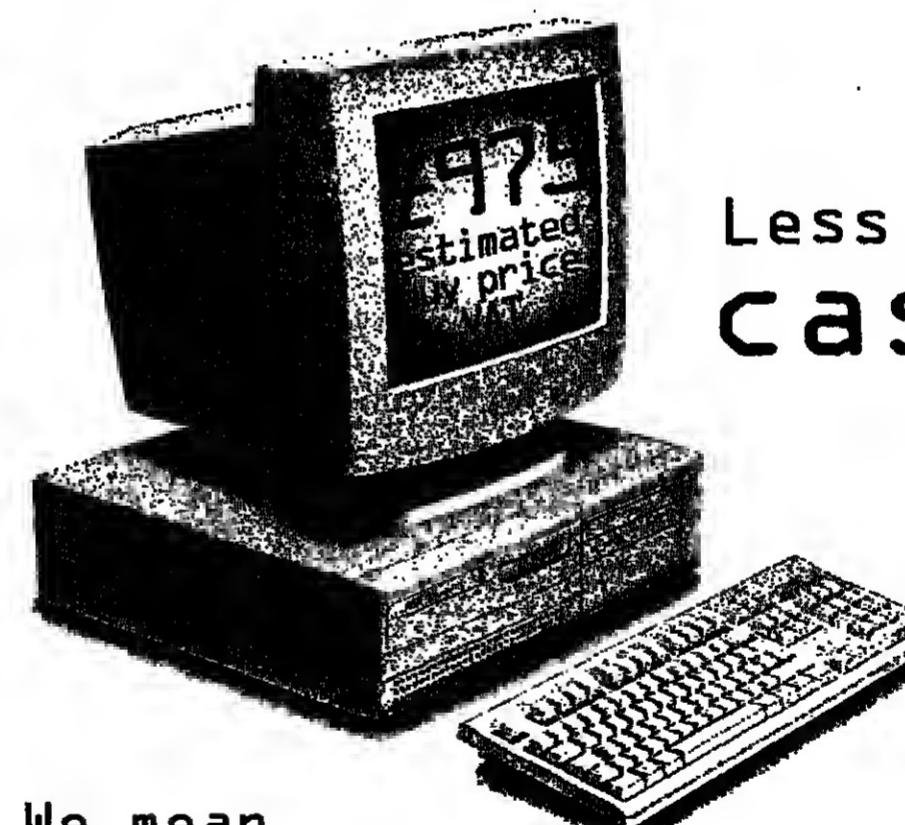
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The man, the message: Professor Ahmed outside Selwyn College last night before his ground-breaking sermon

Photograph: Rob Howarth

news

Anglican service hears Muslim preacher's plea

ANDREW BROWN
Religious Affairs Correspondent

The first British Muslim to preach at an Anglican service last night used the occasion to make an impassioned plea for mutual tolerance and understanding.

Forces of hatred and intolerance were to be found both in the West and among Muslims, said Professor Akbar Ahmed, of Selwyn College, Cambridge. He was invited by the Dean, the Rev Nicholas Cranfield, to preach at evensong yesterday, despite the evangelical protest that greeted a similar invitation to Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan in Oxford last year.

"The generalised and intense contempt of the Western media towards Islam pushes many Muslims into an anti-Western stance. It also makes the Islamic concept of *Jihad*, usually translated as meaning Holy War, in essence a peaceful one," he said.

"It was explained by the Prophet as the attempt to control our own base instincts and work towards a better, more harmonious world. The lesser *jihad* is to battle physically for Islam: that, too, only against tyranny or oppression."

Professor Ahmed told the

congregation that he was doing his Islamic duty to proclaim God. "My Muslim friends warned me that given the vast chasm of misunderstanding between Islam and the West, the general suspicion, the ignorance, and the high emotions around religion, some Muslims may spread the rumour that Akbar Ahmed has not only con-

'Islam has much to offer a world saturated with disintegration, cynicism, and loss of faith'

verted to Christianity, but even began as a priest and taken services. Before Fawahs start flying about, let me scotch the rumour. I am here very much as a Muslim," he said.

Professor Ahmed pointed out that the elements of mutual trust and respect in Muslim-Christian relations went right back to the beginnings of Islam: "When Muslims were being persecuted in Mecca in the early days of Islam, the Holy Prophet sent them to the Chris-

tian land of Abyssinia, confident that they would find hospitality there. Late in the twentieth century, many Muslims again find refuge in the Christian – or at least partly Christian – land of Britain."

Then, in a clear reference to the attempt to expel Saudi dissidents from this country, Professor Ahmed added: "These days I often wonder what the fate of those earlier Muslims would have been if Michael Howard had been waiting for them in Abyssinia."

Understanding between Islam and the West will be crucial for peace in the next millennium, Professor Ahmed said, yet both Muslims and the Western media contrived to distort the message of Islam when it came here.

Western children should be taught a basic understanding of Islam in their schools, he said. By the same token, Muslim children should be taught about democracy in their schools, too. "Islam has much to offer a world saturated with disintegration, cynicism, and loss of faith. However, this will only be possible if there is a universal tolerance of others among Muslims and non-Muslims alike, an appreciation of their uniqueness and a willingness to understand them."

Car makers blocking pedestrian safety bid

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

A project to redesign cars in a way that would make them less of a threat to pedestrians, helping to reduce the 700 deaths and 20,000 injuries across Europe each year, is being blocked by car manufacturers.

Researchers at the Transport Research Laboratory in Berkshire have been working on the scheme since the mid-Eighties. They have calculated that modifying the design to ensure that the fronts of all cars crumple on impact with pedestrians would be worth seven times more in terms of lives and injuries saved than the actual cost of implementing the changes. Under Department of Transport calculations, a life saved is worth just under £1m. The design of the cars would

have to be changed in order to give more room under the bonnet so that the outside shell could "give" when a pedestrian was hit. With current designs, the location of the engine often prevents the bonnet from crumpling.

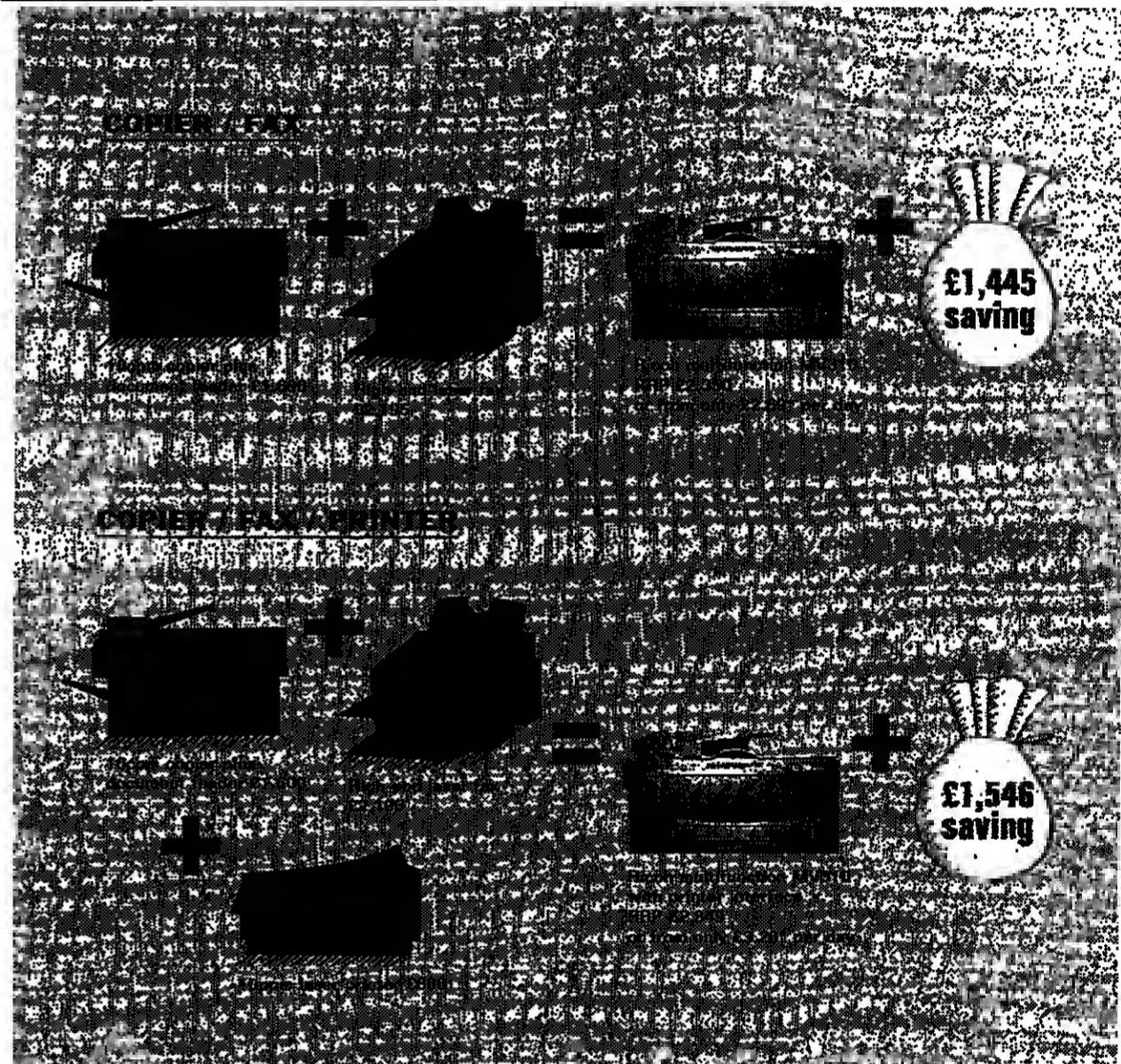
The Government has been at the forefront of pushing this new legislation at European level and has paid for most of the research and the cost of developing tests to assess different car types. But other countries with major car industries have been reluctant to support it because of the alleged cost to manufacturers.

The research suggests that it would be easy to make the necessary changes to all mass production levels, but some top of the range cars – such as Rolls Royces and Jaguars – might have to be given exemptions.

There appeared to be a breakthrough earlier this year when the European Commission finally drew up a draft directive for consideration by member states. Graham Lawrence, the TRL researcher who has been working on the project since its inception, said: "We were delighted that at last the Commission had taken this important step."

However, at a meeting of a technical committee at the European Commission in Brussels earlier this month, pressure from the manufacturers forced the Commission to call for a new cost-benefit analysis – despite the fact that TRL had already carried one out.

Now, according to a European Commission source, "nothing is likely to happen for years and hundreds of lives will be lost".



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news

Train service: Passengers' watchdog criticises managers for complacency, hastily made changes and excessive safety emphasis



David Bertram: Strong argument for saying that privatisation has had a negative impact. Photograph: John Houlihan/Guzelian

Rail privatisation 'will never benefit' users

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

Rail privatisation has yielded no benefits so far and it is doubtful it ever will, according to the new chairman of the rail passengers' watchdog.

In an interview with the *Independent*, David Bertram, who took over three months ago from Major-General Lennox Napier as chairman of the Central Rail Users' Consultative Committee, said: "Lots of the improvements which are promised would have happened anyway. British Rail was already introducing better customer service such as free tea and coffee in First Class and improving its performance generally."

He said that so far, "there was a strong argument in saying that privatisation has had a

negative impact". He cited how a railway worker on a station with a stuck train would not be able to talk directly to the signalman worker at the end of the platform because they work for different companies: "The man on the station has to go to head office of the train operating company, which will contact Railtrack and then go back down to the man in the signal box. As a result, it takes longer to get things moving again when things go wrong because of the separation of the companies."

He feels that railway managers have, in the past, been complacent: "Virtually everyone using the railway has an alternative choice. Even commuters can often use cars or buses. There is no captive market for the railways."

He criticised the rush in

which privatisation was carried out: "They hurried it through. They should have looked first and followed the motto, 'first do no harm'." He is worried that extra layers of bureaucracy have been created with little benefit to the passenger.

Mr Bertram, who lives in Doncaster where he is the chairman of the local NHS Trust, arrived half an hour late for the interview, having been delayed by a broken rail on a crucial part of the East Coast Main Line track, near Welwyn: "I worry about whether these things are increasing. It is down to Railtrack, and already there has been that problem over the tracks out of Euston." The Health and Safety Executive issued an enforcement notice against Railtrack earlier this year because of the dilapidated state of the track.

The state of the West Coast Main Line is of enormous concern to CRUCC and he intends to campaign to ensure that improvements are brought about: "The state of the line is a disgrace and Railtrack does not seem to be doing much about it." He recognises there is a need for a total overhaul and that there are debates over what technology should be used but says: "Perhaps Railtrack is

going about it the wrong way. Every day that the line is not improved means that the eventual investment will cost more."

Mr Bertram has also been angered by the introduction of a bus service between Newark and Lincoln for InterCity East Coast rail users by the new franchisee, Sea Containers. "Why didn't they try to improve the train service between the two stations instead, rather than bring in buses? If I were Central Rail [the local train company], I would be jumping up and down about it."

Mr Bertram, a retired manager who spent his working life in sales and quality control, receives £7,800 for the two day per week role as chairman and was previously chairman of the Eastern consultative committee.

Mr Bertram thinks that there has been too much emphasis on rail safety without consideration of the cost: "If as much attention were paid to accidents on the roads, they would close them down every time there was a shower and you couldn't see through the spray." He reckons that many of the safety features introduced recently, such as much stricter rules about who is allowed on to the track have contributed to the poor performance of the railway.

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EU 'failing' to meet targets on pollution

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

The European Union will spectacularly fail to keep its promises on fighting global warming, according to estimates from the Paris-based International Energy Agency.

At the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, exactly four years ago, the union's 12 member states committed themselves to stabilising their rising yearly emissions of carbon dioxide at the 1990 level by the year 2000.

Carbon dioxide is the most important of the pollutants which trap heat in the atmosphere. It is produced by burning coal, oil and gas and during cement manufacture.

The European Commission projects the EU will break that promise, with emissions 3 per cent above the 1990 level by the turn of the century. According to the International Energy Agency figures, the promise will be broken by 15 per cent.

The commitment was made by all developed nations as part of a climate protection treaty signed by nearly 200 world leaders in Rio.

For the EU it was a collective goal which remained in force when the union expanded to 15 states last year. While some of the poorer, still-industrialising member states, like Greece and Spain, would increase their annual emissions during the ten years, the other, wealthier ones would compensate by dropping theirs.

Each country was required to submit estimates of its projected carbon dioxide emissions to

the Commission. Taking these at face value, the EU as a whole would drop its emissions by 1 per cent.

But the Commission now projects a 3 per cent increase, because it feels some member states were making unrealistic assumptions.

The projections were compiled and analysed by the London-based Association for the Conservation of Energy, a lobbying organisation for fuel-saving industries. Director Andrew Warren said: "Anyone who thinks Europe is going to hit its target is showing a triumph of hope over experience."

The International Energy Agency's projections were based on figures submitted by energy and trade departments of governments. The figures sent to the European Commission come from environment departments.

"I think we're seeing optimism from the environment departments and realism from the energy ones," said Mr Warren.

The most impressive emission cuts will come from Germany and Britain, according to the figures. The UK Government forecasts a 6 per cent cut over the 10 years.

For years the European Commission debated a "carbon tax" on fossil fuels which would apply across the EU as a key means of cutting emissions. But the proposal was水shed, largely because of fierce opposition from Britain, which viewed it as an attack on national sovereignty.

Change in annual CO ₂ emissions Percentage change between 1990 and 2000		
What each country promises	EU estimates	IEA figures
Austria	-8	-9.8
Belgium	-3	-13.7
Denmark	-7	-7.9
Ireland	-33	-22.8
France	-13	-11.6
Germany	-10	-3
Greece	-19	-21
Iceland	-25	-20.4
Italy	-6	-13.8
Luxembourg	-20	-28
Netherlands	0	-3.7
Portugal	-36	-40.3
Spain	-23	-24.1
Sweden	-6	-4.1
UK	-2	0
All 15 together	-1	-3
Source: European Commission, IEA, Association for the Conservation of Energy.		9.5

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Female deaths may be linked to serial killers

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

A national police inquiry, set up in an attempt to track down serial killers, will examine possible links between the murders of up to 220 women who have died since 1986.

Detectives hope to identify common traits in the murders and produce new police guidelines which can be used in future investigations. Senior

officers, representing the 43 forces in England and Wales, will meet at the West Mercia police headquarters in Worcester today to discuss the inquiry, called Operation Enigma.

Agents from the FBI, who are expert in hunting serial killers in the US, will assist the project.

The operational team will not undertake murder investigations, but will offer support to on-going inquiries. The initia-

tive follows concerns about the number of unsolved murders of women and fears that serial killers could be operating undetected because of the lack of a central investigation unit in the United Kingdom.

The potential for mass killers was highlighted last year by the disclosure that nine women had been murdered under similar circumstances over the seven years to 1994. Most of the victims were prostitutes and

all had been strangled. They all had some of their clothes removed and the killer made no attempt to hide their bodies.

Senior police officers met in December last year to discuss the unsolved murders, but after an investigation concluded that they were not linked. However, the operation prompted the Association of Chief Police Officers' Crime Committee to set up Operation Enigma.

Taking part in the inquiry are

officers from the newly formed National Crime Faculty, the National Criminal Intelligence Service, the Forensic Science Service, and the Home Office's Police Research Group. They are expected to examine thousands of witness statements, post-mortem reports, victim profiles, DNA samples, clothing and scene of crime photographs from some of the 220 female murders.

The inquiry will be headed by

James Dickenson, the Assistant Chief Constable of Essex, who said: "Operation Enigma will collate and analyse relevant information regarding the victim, the crime and any suspects from a limited number of detected and undetected murders where the victim is female."

"Work is currently being undertaken with a view to enhancing existing arrangements. This will take account of experiences within the UK and advances in other countries."

Members of the Operation Enigma team have already been

helped by the FBI, who are experienced in running complex computer programmes and investigations into serial killings, with briefings at the bureau's training centre in Quantico, Virginia.

It is also understood that they have been to Vancouver and Toronto to tap into the expertise of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who have also been involved in a number of serial killings.

Prisons suffer severe cuts to classes

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Prisoners are being denied the chance to learn their way out of a criminal career as governors axe education programmes to meet the Treasury demand for budget cuts.

A survey of the country's 130 jails by NATFHE - the university and college lecturer's union - has found that some of the most volatile prisons are cutting education services by half. Albany high security jail on the Isle of Wight is set to lose 83 per cent of its programme.

The *Independent* has also learned that in Holloway - the troubled women's prison - some of the worst cuts have been forced on it, not by the Prison Service, but by Kingsway College, in North London, which won the private contract to run its education services three years ago.

The college imposed cuts of 17 per cent in 1995 and in March this year ordered another 15 per cent cut - each running alongside the demand by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, for "austerer regimes" which has led to further reductions in classes and activities.

A leaked section of the interim report by Sir David Ramsbotham, the Chief Inspector of Prisons who recently walked out of Holloway in disgust at the conditions he found, found that teaching staff were "marginally demoralised, demoralised and grossly undervalued".

He also found that classes were constantly being cut because of shortages of prison officers and in the three weeks before his inspection the library had closed because staff were on other duties.

Sir David concluded: "This was the worst treatment of an education department and teachers I have seen in 34 years of involvement in education."

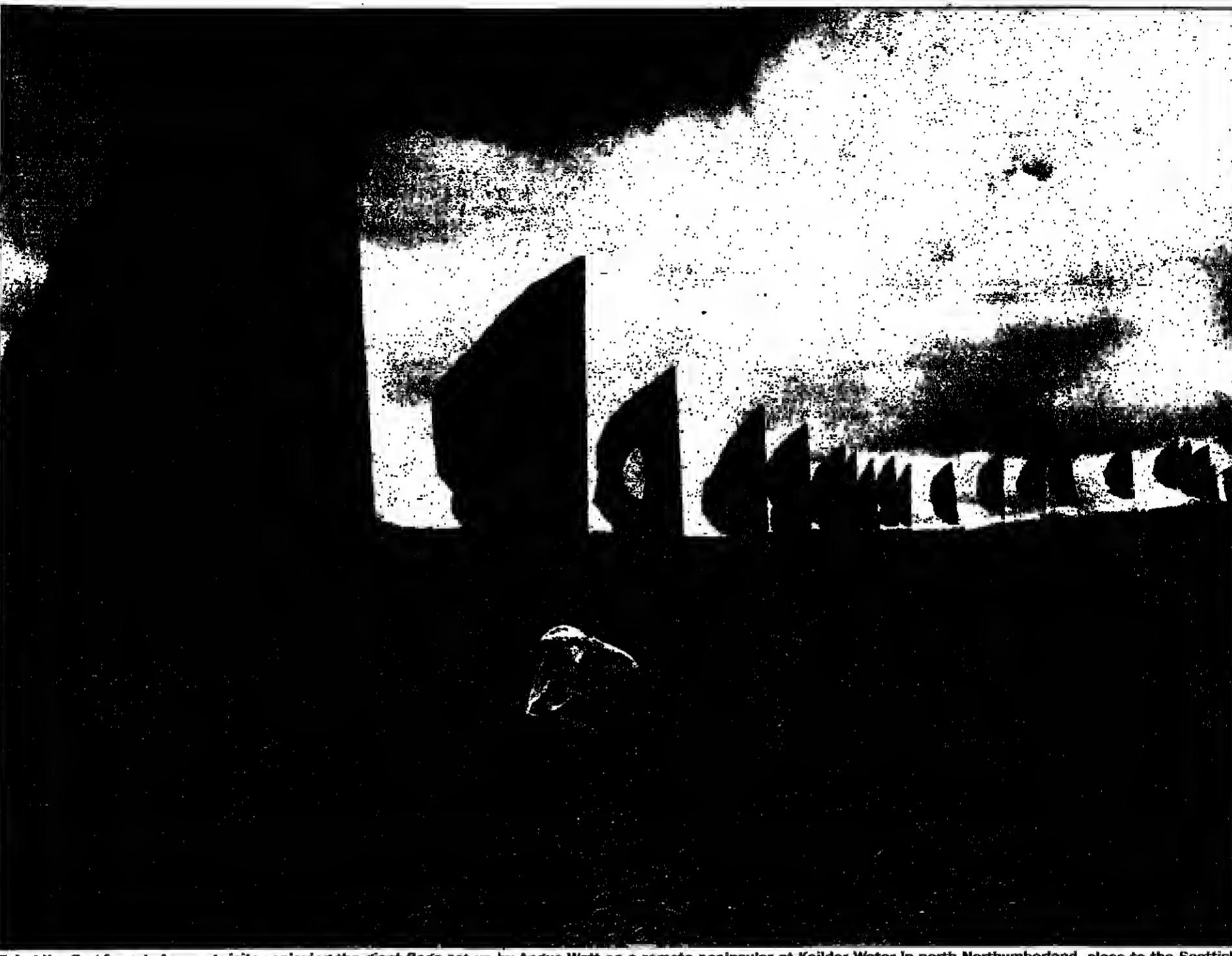
Hilary Beauchamp, a teacher at the jail for 20 years, who was awarded an MBE for services to creative arts at Holloway, said: "We were abandoned from two sides - but the abandonment by the educators was the harder rejection."

Yesterday NATFHE said that faced with an ever-rising prison population as well as shrinking budgets, governors saw education as a "soft target".

The union called for an urgent inquiry into prison education as it revealed that jails were suffering a scale of cuts in just six months equivalent to the reductions due to be phased in over three years in the rest of further and higher education.

According to NATFHE, prison lecturers in all jails now have to decide which inmates will be offered education and turn all others away.

"NATFHE is extremely concerned about these cuts ... for the prison population they will be a setback for rehabilitation and the prevention of reoffending," its report concludes.



Flying the flag for art: A young visitor enjoying the giant flags set up by Angus Watt on a remote peninsula at Kielder Water in north Northumberland, close to the Scottish border. Watt's installation, *Inflamante Delicto*, is part of Visual Arts UK Year. Photograph: Ted Ditchburn

Bankruptcies blamed on credit card habit

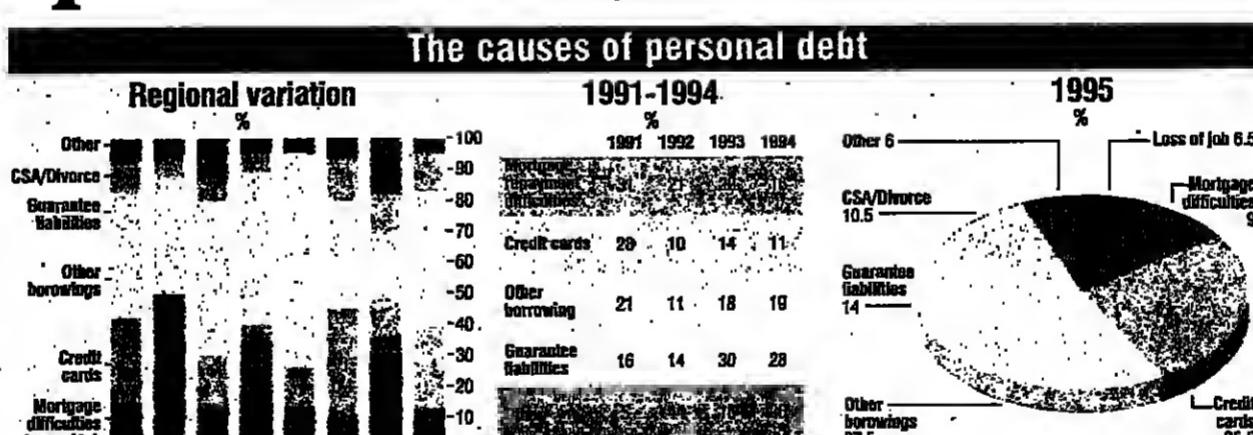
TOM STEVENSON
and JOHN WILLCOCK

Mr Micawber didn't have a flexible friend but he knew a thing or two about the misery they are capable of. He would not have been surprised by new figures showing that more than a quarter of all domestic bankruptcies are blamed on the profligate use of credit cards.

The Child Support Agency would have been a novel concept to his Dickensian mind, but probably not the news that a tenth of personal insolvency cases brought last year cited the cost of divorce, or the payment of child maintenance, as a major cause.

Statistics from the Society of Practitioners in Insolvency (SPI), published today, paint a bleak picture of a nation which is unable to kick the borrowing habit. Almost two-thirds of last year's non-business-related bankruptcies were the direct result of consumer credit.

Credit cards and other types of borrowing, such as hire purchase and unsecured personal loans, were blamed in more than half the domestic cases. The rise in consumer borrow-



ing offset a decline in the proportion of people brought down by the cost of paying their mortgage or giving personal guarantees to business loans.

The decline in mortgage-related bankruptcies is a continuation of a marked decline in problems related to home loans since the survey was first conducted in 1991. Only 9 per cent of domestic bankruptcies were blamed on mortgage bills compared with 31 per cent in 1991 when interest rates were more

than twice their current level. The CSA denied the charge that it was driving absent parents into financial difficulties: "Like any other organisation responsible for enforcing legal or financial responsibilities, the CSA can enter people's lives at difficult times. However, absent parents will always be left with at least 70 per cent of their net income after paying maintenance."

Commenting on the results, Gordon Stewart, president of SPI, said: "Involvement professionals have long been aware that marital and family breakdown is a common consequence of an individual becoming insolvent."

"The survey shows that the opposite is also true - people who are already facing financial difficulty can become insolvent, because they haven't made allowance for paying maintenance to former partners and children on top of their other debts."

"These are debts they can't avoid. Even if they enter insolvency proceedings, the courts will still require absent parents to meet their responsibilities."

Although consumer credit

confirmed as the most likely reason for individuals to be swamped by debts.

Bankruptcy petitions by the tax authorities have always accounted for a large proportion of personal insolvencies, partly because, unlike many other creditors, they have the resources to pursue debts regardless of whether it makes commercial sense to do so.

Within domestic bankruptcies, marked regional differences emerged last year, with individuals in Scotland and the Midlands proving worse at managing their money and business than elsewhere. More than 34 per cent of business-related insolvencies in the Midlands were caused by tax and VAT debts, compared with 21 per cent nationally. The figure for Scotland was 27 per cent.

In the South East, more people came to grief with credit cards than any other cause. Redundancy lay behind almost a third of bankruptcies in the South West while half of all problems in East Anglia were caused by mortgages. In the North West, hire purchase and unsecured personal loans accounted for half of all cases.

MPs bid to scrap limits on control of media

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, is striving to face down a Commons attempt to raise or scrap the threshold preventing media groups with more than 20 per cent of the newspaper market from controlling terrestrial television stations.

Whitbread sources said Mrs Bottomley was determined to maintain the threshold in spite of the opposition of an alliance between Labour MPs and free-market Tories who are threatening to defeat the cross-media ownership clause of her Broadcasting Bill in committee tomorrow. "She intends to win and believes she will do so," one source said.

Two MPs on the right-wing of the Tory party John Whittingdale and Peter Atkinson have tabled an amendment seeking to scrap the threshold, leaving it up to the Independent Television Commission to decide whether any bid above the 20-per-cent threshold is in the public interest.

Labour propose lifting it to 25 per cent. This would allow Mirror Group Newspapers into the non-cable, non satellite television market. But Labour have also submitted an amendment to lift the threshold altogether, which would allow Rupert Murdoch's News International to enter the terrestrial television market if he could show it was in the public interest to do so.

The two Tories will risk their posts as parliamentary private secretaries if they persist with the amendment, although Labour sources were optimistic the minority parties would support them. Robert MacLennan, the Liberal Democrat MP in the standing Committee, refused yesterday to disclose how he would vote.

One area of compromise could be an offer by Mrs Bottomley to lengthen the time a company would have to divest itself of a stake in television if it had passed the 20-per-cent mark. But she was said to be determined not to make more substantial concessions before the standing committee vote.

Labour is determined that the Mirror Group, part owners of the *Independent*, should be given the same access as rival newspaper companies to the terrestrial television market.

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Infectious diseases re-emerge as threat

GLENDA COOPER

The world is facing a crisis over infectious diseases which kill at least 17 million people a year, the World Health Organisation warns today in its 1996 report.

"Fatal complacency" means that diseases once thought to be subdued – such as tuberculosis and malaria – are fighting back, and other infections are now so resistant to drugs they are virtually untreatable. Nearly 50,000 people a day are dying, often from diseases that could be prevented or cured for little more than a dollar per person.

At least 30 new infectious diseases have emerged in the last 20 years including HIV/Aids (which 26.6 million adults could be living with by 2000) and Ebola fever, which was fatal in 80 per cent of cases when it struck in Zaire in 1995. The WHO also notes that "fears are growing of a possible food-chain link between bovine spongiform encephalopathy and a form of the incurable Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans".

Migration, global travel, and rapid population growth mean that disease-producing organisms are being transported from one continent to another. In March, the WHO and Unicef declared as an international health emergency the diphtheria epidemic sweeping the independent states of the former USSR. Europe now accounts for 80 per cent of the world's diphtheria cases.

The number of registered cholera cases in the WHO's European region also increased ninefold from 1993 to 1994. Tuberculosis strains resistant to drugs are increasing, and the number of cases of malaria, a nearly forgotten disease in 1980s Europe, has risen sharply.

In Britain, there have been 25 cases of diphtheria imported between 1990 and 1994, and nearly 40 cases of imported cholera from 1993 to 1995. Tuberculosis has remained constant at around 5,500 to 6,000 cases a year.

Until recently, antibiotics were regarded as the solution to many infectious diseases, but they are becoming less effective as resistance to them

spreads. All bacteria possess an inherent flexibility to evolve genes that render them resistant to antibiotics. But because they have been used by too many people to treat the wrong kind of infection, that resistance has spread up.

"The implications are awesome," says the report. "Drugs that cost tens of millions of dollars to produce and take perhaps 10 years to reach the market have only a limited lifespan in which they are effective. As resistance spreads, that lifespan shrinks; as fewer new drugs appear, the gap widens between infection and control."

Successes for the WHO include poliomyelitis, cases of which have dropped 85 per cent since 1988, and eight out of ten children worldwide are now vaccinated against six major childhood diseases. But without concerted global action, the success in completely eradicating smallpox will not be repeated, the organisation warns.

"Despite the emergence of some 30 new diseases in the last 20 years, there is still a lack of national and international political will and resources to develop and support the systems necessary to detect them and stop their spread. Without doubt, diseases as yet unknown, but with the potential to be the Aids of tomorrow, lurk in the shadows."

Hiroshi Nakajima, director-general of the WHO, identified a number of priority areas. He said extra resources must be mobilised to eliminate illnesses such as polio and guinea-worm disease; surveillance and control of infectious diseases must be improved; intensive research into new and emerging diseases, and ways of controlling them, should be encouraged; and public education in food and personal hygiene practices should be intensified.

"Today, infectious diseases are not only a health issue; they have become a social problem with tremendous consequences for the well-being of the individual and the world we live in," said Dr Nakajima. "We need to recognise them as a common threat that has been ignored at great cost for too long and to build the global solidarity to confront them."



Hunt begins for Lake District's elusive carpet moth

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

The netted carpet moth gets some of its name from the distinctive network pattern on its forewings, and not from any propensity to chew rugs. There are several species of carpet moth, so-called because early naturalists thought they looked like exotic eastern carpets.

In Britain, this particular species is now found at just 11 small sites in the Lake District and two in north-west Wales. Its

population is known to have plunged in the past 15 years.

The inch-wide moth's misfortunes are connected with the decline of the only plant on which its caterpillars can feed, yellow balsam or touch-me-not.

The adults do not emerge from their chrysalises until July, then they mate and lay eggs. This timing ensures that the young caterpillars can eat the plant's growing seeds within their pods, a rich source of protein. They are also disguised as these pods to avoid being eaten.

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timing
of break
surgeon

Teachers threaten to boycott sports

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

School sports could be hit by a teachers' boycott because of fears that staff could be held liable for accidents on the pitch.

Teachers are threatening to stop taking games outside school hours after a rugby referee was held liable for injuries sustained by a young player during a scrum.

The biggest union, the National Union of Teachers (NUT), is writing to all teachers' employers today to demand information about whether its members are insured when they take team practices and after-school matches.

Any school or authority that cannot provide reassurance within 48 hours will face a boycott of extra-curricular sport by union members.

The other two main teachers' unions, the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) are also telling members that they should not take team games outside school hours unless they are sure they are covered.

The ATL is advising teachers not to bow to pressure to take lessons in dangerous sports such as rugby or swimming unless they are fully qualified.

The action follows a claim for damages by a rugby player who was paralysed after a scrum collapsed, the first such case to be brought against a referee. Ben Smidson, aged 21, was confined to a wheelchair after the accident.

debt which took place while he was playing for Sutton Coldfield Colts.

Although employers' liability insurance protects staff in the course of their duties, and an agreement set up in 1973 obliges local authorities to make sure that extra-curricular activities are covered, the unions fear there may be loopholes. Grant-maintained schools are not covered by the agreement and new unitary authorities may not be aware of it, the NUT says.

The NUT general secretary, Doug McAvoy, said it would be foolhardy for teachers to carry on taking sports if they were not sure that they were covered.

"It is unacceptable that their commitment to school sport and their pupils' physical development could leave them open to claims for damages," he said.

Alan Parker, education officer of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said he thought all local authority schools had proper insurance. However, he admitted that there were "grey areas" where staff members took children for activities which might not be defined as part of their jobs, such as friendly games at a local sports centre or club.

"It is a reasonable action for the NUT to take but I would be extremely surprised if it revealed any problem within a maintained school," he said.

Nigel Hook, deputy general secretary of the Central Council for Physical Recreation, urged heads and governing bodies to check their insurance as a matter of urgency.

DAILY POEM

A dream of the Dalai Lama on Skye

By Kathleen Jamie

A summer wind blows the horn of Glen Brittle.
It's a hard walk, Black Cuillin
to his left hand; asks
the midsummer moon
setting over Canna, what metaphors
does the market whisper?
If the hills changed shape,
who would tell me?

She shines on ditches choked
with yellow iris; butter-lamps
in a temple corner; a snail-shell
in his moonlit palm:
the golden dimple of an icoo's smile.
He smiles too, oozes
the private union of burn and sea,
as one by one, lawrocks rise,
irises open. When no one's watching,
he jumps lightly onto Scay
and airborne seeds
of saxifrage, settled
on the barroo Cuillin
waken into countless tiny stars.

Kathleen Jamie, it was announced last week, has won the 1996 Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize for her collection *The Queen of Sheba* (Bloodaxe, £6.95). The prize is awarded annually and is given in alternate years for a volume of verse and a volume of prose fiction. Tony Harrison, John Fuller, Douglas Dunn and Paul Muldoon have been amongst the poetry recipients; Will Self, Julian Barnes, J M Coetzee and Timothy Mo have received the prize for fiction.

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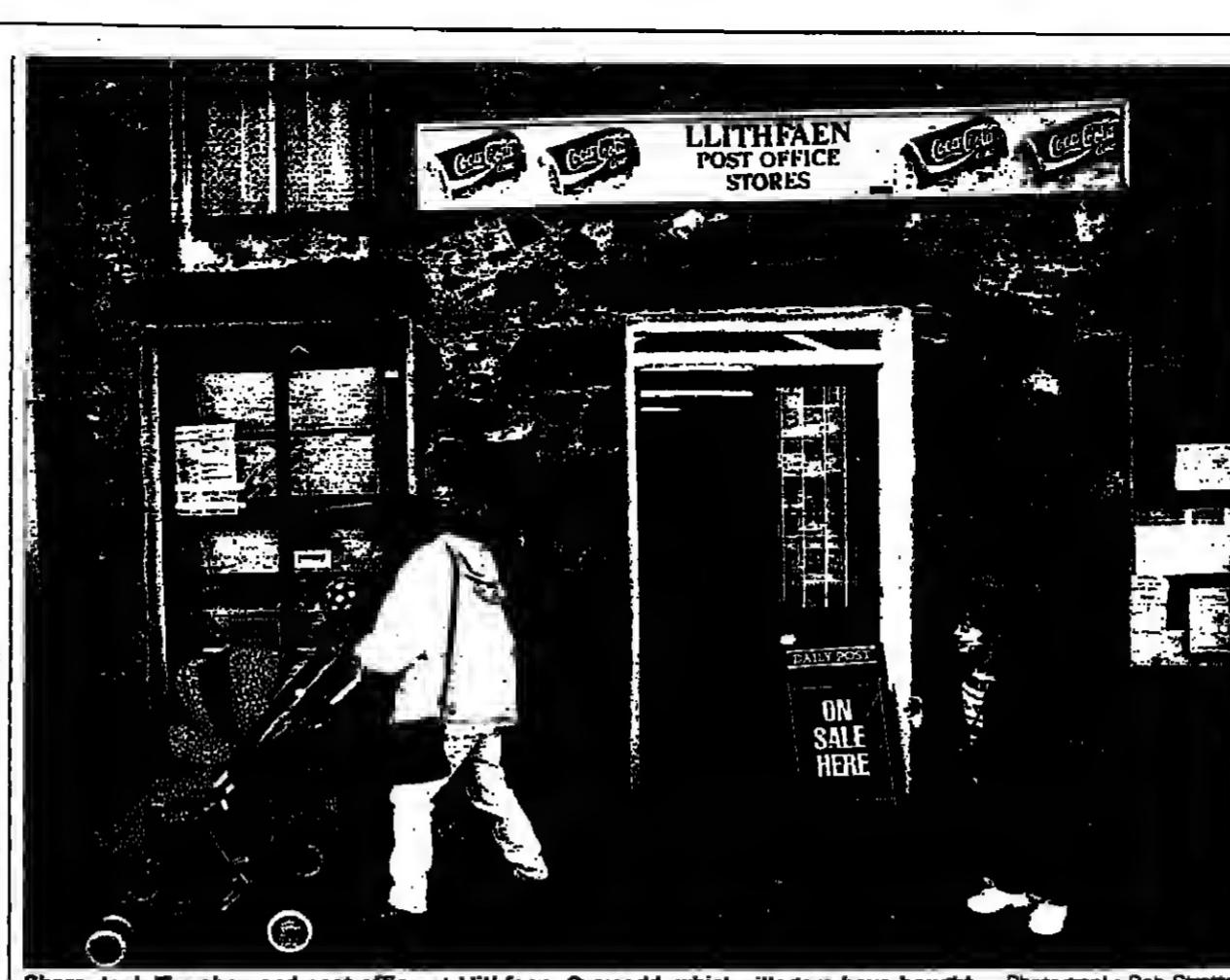
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Share deal: The shop and post office at Llithfaen, Gwynedd, which villagers have bought

Photograph: Rob Stratton

Village buy-out saves local store

RICHARD SMITH

A village which bought its own pub has made another foray into the property market - to snap up the local shop and post office.

Llithfaen's only retail outlet was on the market for two years without attracting a purchaser. But when store owners David and Carole Bonehill set a closure date villagers mounted their own buy-out campaign and raised £22,000.

People are dropping in for their washing powder or whatever and even though the shop is only open in the morning at present takings are already very near the level predicted in the questionnaire.

Llyfnywy Jones was among a 60-strong group of locals who acquired another of Llithfaen's main assets - the village pub. They raised £30,000 to buy the pub from a brewery and spent £13,000 on repairs which they carried out themselves.

Now the pub talk in Llithfaen is that with 50 primary school age children in the village its about time they start a campaign to reopen the school.

All hands to the pump.

We need your help because one day you may need ours.

Heart disease is the main cause of death in the UK and Royal Brompton is one of the leading heart hospitals in the world. (Recently some of our operations were watched via satellite by 4,000 surgeons.)

The heart, as you may know, acts as a pump. In fact, there are two pumps working side by side, one in each chamber (1 & 2). The left pump sends blood full of oxygen around the body. The right pump sends blood that has run out of oxygen back to the lungs for more.

Anything that threatens this circulation is a matter of life and death. At Royal Brompton we have saved thousands of lives. With your help we will save thousands more if we can continue the research and treatment that has led us, amongst other things, to be the first hospital in the country to do a full heart and lung transplant; the first NHS hospital to use lasers for otherwise untreatable angina; and the first in the world to mend a hole in a baby's heart without the need for open heart surgery.

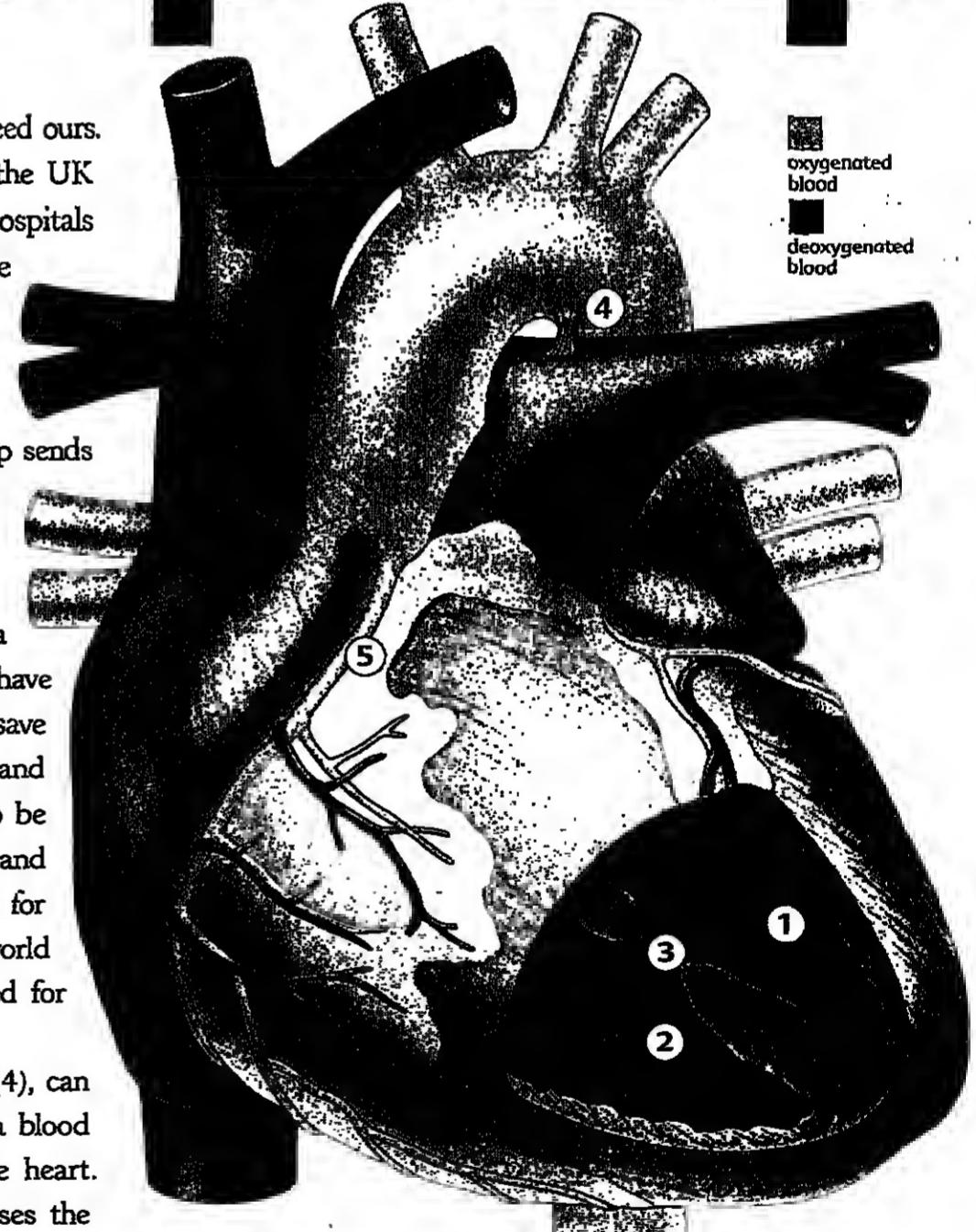
A hole in the heart (3), and the arterial duct (4), can now be closed by inserting a tiny 'umbrella' into a blood vessel in the groin and then moving it up to the heart. When it reaches the right position, a trigger releases the umbrella which then closes the hole.

In adults, the most common cause of heart failure is a blocked artery (5). Nowadays, major open heart surgery can often be avoided by guiding a balloon into the blocked artery - again through a blood vessel - inflating it and then putting in a tiny stainless steel pit-prop, called a stent, to keep the artery open.

We can also attach cutting edges to balloons to widen arteries and veins that have narrowed.

Although virtually all parts of the heart can now be enlarged or closed by these methods, there are still some cases that need the skills of our dedicated team of surgeons.

Every year we care for thousands of patients,



including 400 babies born with heart defects. This year we hope to raise at least £1.5 million through the Heart of Britain campaign, starting the first week of July.

Look out for the Union Jack symbol and for supporting events throughout the summer.

But please don't wait until then to help. July is over four million healthy heartbeats away. So if you can find it in your heart to make a donation, phone 0891 525107* or send it to The Heart of Britain Appeal, Royal Brompton Hospital, London SW3 6NP.

1996 is our benefit year. But in years to come, it could be you or someone you love who really gets the benefit.



*Calls cost 39p per minute cheap rate, 45p per minute at all other times.

In support of Royal Brompton Hospital, the leading edge in heart research and treatment.

international

Dwindling diaspora fails to keep the faith*

Introducing a series of articles on Jews around the world, Eric Silver considers the impact of a declining population

A community of fate

Jerusalem — The historian Jacob Talmoo called the Jews "a community of fate"; the philosopher Martin Buber called them "a people with a memory". As their traumatic 20th century nears its end, the memory is fading, and the community outside Israel is withering away.

The demographic debate is no longer between optimists and pessimists, but between the less pessimistic and the more pessimistic. European Jews, already decimated by the Holocaust, have slumped from more than 3 million to barely 2 million in 30 years. In Britain the total has eroded from 400,000 to 300,000. The only countries where Jewish births exceed deaths are Israel and the 700 proud Jews of Gibraltar.

Where there has been any growth in recent years, it was a product of inward migration: North African Jews to France and Quebec; Russians to Germany; Russians and Israelis to the United States. In the opposite direction, Israel exerts a steady pull on the more committed. The ultra-Orthodox are the only Jewish group still having large families.

"We are fighting a losing battle," David Harman, director of Jewish education in the Jewish Agency, which links Israel and world Jewry, told the *Independent*. "There will not be significant Jewish communities in Europe in the early part of the next century. In the US, they will meander a little longer because of the sheer bulk involved. In the former Soviet Union, they have one Jewish birth for every 11 Jewish deaths. Latin America may hold out for a while."

In *Vanishing Diaspora*, a new history of European Jewry since 1945, Bernard Wasserstein concludes: "We are witnessing the disappearance of the European diaspora as a population group, as a cultural entity and as a significant force in European society."

Daniel Elazar, a political sci-



No change: Hasidic Jews in London. Orthodox groups may soon be the only thriving diaspora communities left

Photograph: Tom Pilston

ence professor at Bar-Ilan University, near Tel Aviv, accuses them of exaggeration. Just "It's a bad situation, but it's not quite as bad as the scare headlines indicate." He speculated that within the next century Jews in North America would decline from 6 million to 4 million; in Europe from 2.3 million to 1.5 million; and Latin America from 500,000 to 250,000.

But Professor Elazar had little to go on, save a scholarly scepticism about "linear pro-

jections" (the assumption that trends continue in a straight line) and a faith in Jewish bloody-mindedness. "People in general, and Jews in particular," he suggested, "are full of surprises."

Maybe, but the evidence is discouraging. Jews are condemned less and less to be outsiders. The barriers are coming down, and the Jews are scrambling over. Taboos against "mixed" marriages are willing — on both sides. And Jews, like

their peers in the professional and commercial middle class, are breeding less.

According to Jewish Agency estimates quoted by David Harman, there are only 1.55 million Jewish children of school age (5-18) in all the countries of the diaspora. Of these, 1,150,000 are in North America, 400,000 in the rest of the world. The total diaspora is about 10 million. "This is a population," he said, "that is not being replenished." In the US, studies suggest that

52 per cent of marriages involving Jews are mixed. In Britain, rabbis and lay leaders acknowledge that the rate is at least 30 per cent. Some put it nearer 50 per cent. In 83 per cent of US mixed marriages, neither partner converts to the religion of the other. Only 6 per cent of the non-Jews now convert to Judaism, while 11 per cent of the Jews "convert out".

Diaspora leaders, like the British Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, have tried to shock their constituents with the question: "Will we have Jewish grandchildren?" Spurred on by Israel, they are launching ambitious "Jewish continuity" programmes. But they are starting from a narrow base; there is not enough money, and much of their appeal falls on deaf ears. In the whole of the diaspora, only 45-50 per cent of Jewish children receive any Jewish education. Less than half go to Jewish day schools, few of which take them into the formative

years after *barmizah* at 13. At the same time, educational institutions, designed to sow Jewish identity, are failing to attract enough teenagers. In the peak summer of 1987, about 12,000 attended these subsidised courses. This year enrolment is down to 5,000.

"One cannot attribute such a drop only to the security situation," Mr Harman admitted. "There's a weakening of interest among both kids and parents."

The vanishing diaspora

	1937	1946	1994
Austria	900,000	30,000	7,000
Belgium	65,000	45,000	31,800
Bulgaria	49,000	44,200	1,900
Czech Republic	100,000	35,000	7,600
Denmark	8,500	5,000	6,400
Egypt	100,000	5,000	3,500
France	300,000	225,000	530,000
Greece	77,000	10,000	4,800
Iceland	5,000	3,900	1,200
Ireland	5,000	5,000	5,000
Latvia	95,000	5	18,000
Lithuania	55,000	5	6,500
Netherlands	140,000	28,000	25,000
Poland	3,000	215,000	8,000
Romania	850,000	420,000	10,000
Slovakia	100,000	6,000	12,000
Sweden	7,500	15,500	16,500
USSR	1,000,000	285,000	18,000
Turkey	50,000	48,000	18,000
Total	6,000,000	1,971,000	822,000
Yugoslavia	71,000	12,000	3,500
<i>Total diaspora</i>	6,068,000	3,898,350	1,960,900

Note: These figures, collected from many sources, are of varying reliability and in some cases are subject to a wide margin of error and interpretation. This warning applies particularly to the figures for 1946, a year in which there was considerable Jewish population movement.

† Total for Czech Republic and Slovakia.

‡ Total for former Yugoslavia.

§ Baltic States included in USSR between 1941 and 1991.

From *Vanishing Diaspora* By Bernard Wasserstein

Would-be killer angry at Israel deal by Turkey

HUGH POPE

Istanbul

A deranged 48-year-old pharmacist who pulled a pistol on Turkish President Suleyman Demirel to protest against a military co-operation agreement with Israel was being questioned yesterday about his possible links to Turkey's radical Islamic fringe.

Ibrahim Gumrukcuoglu had taken aim at Mr Demirel on Saturday as he stepped down from a podium after making a speech at a shopping centre in Izmit, an industrial province 80 miles east of Istanbul.

"Suddenly I saw a gun barrel. I threw myself straight on it and the gun went off. If I hadn't jumped the president would have been hit," said Sukru Cukuru, Mr Demirel's chief of security. The bullet passed through Mr Cukuru's upper arm, went past the president and lodged above the knee of a press photographer.

As calls of concern poured into the president's office — notably from Israeli President Ezer Weizman — investigators were looking into some extraordinary lapses of security.



Foiled assassin: Ibrahim Gumrukcuoglu (left) and his target, the Turkish president Suleyman Demirel

This first major military co-operation accord between Israel and a Muslim country has been violently attacked by radical Islamist publications and the pro-Islamist Welfare Party, since December the highest single group in the parliament.

A copy of one such newspaper, *Akit*, was found in Mr Gumrukcuoglu's village house. He had set up a "mesec" chapel in his basement. With full beard and Ottoman-style baggy trousers, Mr Gumrukcuoglu looked the picture of a provincial Islamic fundamentalist.

Records of this former government employee showed that he turned to religion after his two-year old son drowned in a well. He had in the past received extensive treatment for alcoholism and apparently suffered from bone marrow disease.

Turkish media quickly folded the story into a scene of general political uncertainty that has brought the centre-right coalition government so low that one

of its senior ministers, Rusdu Saracoglu, admitted last week that it was simply not working.

Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz has now virtually accused his partner, True Path Party leader Tansu Ciller, of stealing more than \$5m of secret funds. And last week, the constitutional court annulled the vote of confidence that brought them to power in March.

Gungor Mengi, of the *Sabah* newspaper, said: "The attempted assassination should be a warning to all those who are pushing politics into a dead end with useless debates."

The circumstances of the assassination, however, tell the story of a different Turkey. By the time he came to watch the roof go up on a shopping centre in Izmit, Mr Demirel had already opened a new tyre cord factory, a business centre and a municipal building in a rapidly developing province that already has the highest per capita income in Turkey.

Capture of Hamas 'bomb controller' hailed by army

PATRICK COCKBURN

Jerusalem

"I cocked my gun," says Sergeant Meiri of the moment on Friday night when a man in a car stopped by his patrol in the city of Hebron ignored requests for his identity card and started to walk away. "I yelled at him again to stop and then I saw him draw a gun. I did not hesitate for a minute. I shot at him from a distance of 40-45 metres."

The man disappeared down an alley. Half an hour later Israeli troops raided the Alia hospital in Hebron where they identified a badly wounded man with a bullet in his back as Hassan Salameh, a military leader of Hamas, the militant Islamic movement. Israel says he is the man who organised three suicide bomb attacks in Israel in February and March which killed 43 people.

His capture comes at a convenient moment for the government. In 10 days it faces an election in which the overriding issue will be its ability to provide security to Israelis. "This relieves the pressure," said Shimon Peres, the prime minister, yesterday. "This man really was a ticking bomb." It is also relevant that Israel has postponed the partial withdrawal of the

army from Hebron until after the elections.

The army was also eager to highlight its success though frustrated by its inability to hold a press conference until the end of the Sabbath in order not to offend religious Jews. Dusk fell on Saturday at 8.11pm, an inconvenient time; the main Israeli television news begins at 8pm. But at the instant the Sabbath ended, Brigadier General Uzi Dayan, the military commander of the West Bank, announced to viewers: "We've settled the blood feud."

By the army's account 25-year-old Hassan Abd al-Rahman Salameh, born in Gaza, joined Hamas at an early age during the Palestinian intifada in which he threw stones and disposed of collaborators with Israel. Briefly arrested in 1992 he went to Syria and Sudan where he received training, some of it from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. In 1994 he returned to Gaza and joined the Izzedine al-Qassam brigades, the military wing of Hamas.

Salameh only became important in January this year when he was sent by Mohammed Deif, the head of Izzedine al-Qassam, to the West Bank to organise suicide attacks.

He recruited Jamil Abu Warda, a student teacher from al-Fawwar refugee camp near Hebron, who in turn found three young men willing carry out the suicide attacks. In a space of less than two weeks two buses were destroyed along with their passengers.

Gen Dayan was more evasive about the background of the driver of the car in which Salameh was a passenger and in which three pistols, some grenades and a submachine gun were discovered. His name is Rafiq Raajoub, a cousin of Colonel Jibril Raajoub, the powerful head of the Palestinian Preventive Security based in Jericho. Gen Dayan dismissed the Col Raajoub connection, saying he had many relatives. However Col Raajoub's brother and nephew were later arrested.

It is a small boost for the government to have caught the man identified as being behind three of the suicide bombs, but it is doubtful if Salameh was as important as it claims. The military wing of Hamas appears to operate through insulated cell rather than a command structure like a regular army.

Meanwhile the Israeli armed forces are at their highest state of alert ever since the foundation of the state in 1948 in case of an attack before election day.



Wounded: Hamas military leader Hassan Salameh

singers on Jaffa road in Jerusalem and a third attack killed a woman soldier near Ashkelon.

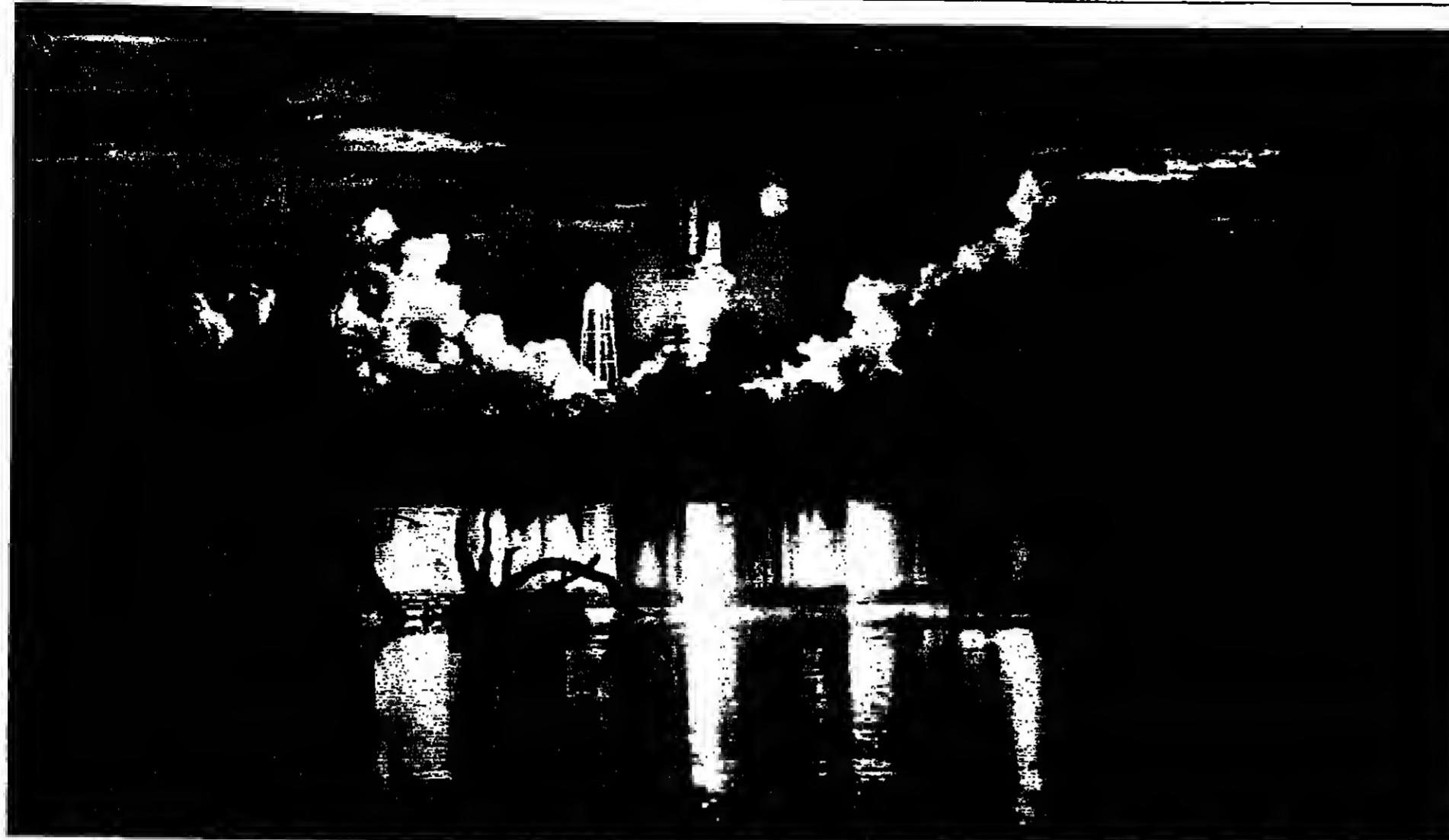
Standing in front of maps and aerial photographs of the centre of Hebron, showing the narrow twisting streets, Gen Dayan said the army had no prior intelligence which enabled them to capture Salameh. He hotly denied, however, that it

We never accept money from strangers.

الله اعلم

e faith

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Space mission: The shuttle Endeavor lifting off from Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. Six astronauts from a joint US/Canadian project investigating dwindling fish stocks, human bone disorders and birth defects, are to test an inflatable antenna the size of a tennis court and monitor a space aquarium

Photograph: Reuter

US workfare plan: President approves radical Wisconsin scheme to cut payments to jobless

Clinton aims to slash welfare

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

In a move which could bring closer sweeping reform of the federal welfare system, President Clinton has publicly endorsed a radical "workfare" plan approved by the state of Wisconsin that would scrap the existing system entirely and require every recipient to take a job, subsidised or otherwise.

Wisconsin, a traditionally progressive northern state, has long been in the vanguard of welfare reform. With Washington's approval, 38 of the 50 states are now experimenting. The latest scheme however, White House spokesman Mike McCurry said, was "the most revolutionary of all", placing a limit of five years on the time anyone can receive welfare, and guaranteeing in effect that a person who cannot find a job in the private sector will be given one by the state.

On no issue - crime, education, not even health care - are Americans more convinced that reform is essential than welfare, which featured large in the 1994 "Contract with America" that helped the Republicans win back control of Congress.

Naturally, in an election year, Mr Clinton's offer was faced with politics. By no coincidence he chose to make it three days before Bob Dole, his presumptive Republican opponent, travels to Wisconsin to make a major speech on welfare, which is certain to berate the President's failure to deliver on his highly effective 1992 campaign pledge to "end welfare as we know it".

But once again, in his shift to the centre ground on a variety of social issues, Mr Clinton has nearly stolen Republican clothes, pre-empting Mr Dole

on a theme his challenger was banking on to erode the President's forbidding lead in the polls - no less than 22 percentage points according to a Time/CNN poll this weekend.

Adding to Republican irritation, the scheme on which the White House is lavishing such praise was devised by Wisconsin's Republican Governor, Tommy Thompson, who happens to feature high on Mr Dole's list of possible Vice-Presidential running mates. Predictably furious Dole supporters were yesterday accusing Mr Clinton of "cynical deception".

One step too far for British politicians

The Wisconsin proposal is far more extreme than anything yet advocated by any mainstream politician in Britain, writes Nicholas Timmins

The Department of Employment already has bruised powers to require attendance of individuals at Job Clubs and other work-seeking measures which will be somewhat strengthened when the new Jobseekers' Allowance takes effect in October.

Labour has also aired limited proposals to require the young to be in work, education, or a government-approved programme for a time.

But full-blown "workfare" - the requirement that benefit will be paid to the unemployed only on condition of participation in a training programme or community sponsored job - has relatively few advocates.

Politicians on both the right and left - including Michael

Portillo when he was Secretary of State for Employment, have raised the idea of the state becoming the "employer of last resort", on the grounds both of cost and disruption to the labour market.

Providing even limited and voluntary work schemes such as the Community Programme has proved expensive and of mixed impact, they argue - and the cost would be far greater if all the unemployed

were required permanently to be in schemes or in training. And workfare schemes would be likely to displace employees in "real" jobs, they argue.

There will also be considerable scepticism in Britain over whether the Wisconsin programme will fulfil its pledge to withdraw benefit entirely after five years, leaving people to fend for themselves. There would, however, be much fascination observation of what followed.

The measure approved by the Wisconsin state legislature still requires a "waiver" from the Clinton administration before it can take effect. Essentially however, it does away with the \$25m Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) programme, the centrepiece of US welfare since its introduction in 1935 as part of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.

Instead, anyone who seeks to go on welfare would have four choices. He could take a normal unsubsidised job (provided one was available), or failing that a "trial job" partly subsidised by the state. If that was not possible, the welfare recipient could enrol for community service, to acquire the skills to find a job in the private sector. The fourth option is "transitional work" for people with limited capabilities.

He or she would be eligible for a "job access loan", similar to student loans, to help pay college fees, that would be repaid later either in cash or by voluntary work. Paradoxically, the Wisconsin scheme would not save money, at least at first. Any cuts in benefits would be outweighed by the cost of extra child care to permit a welfare recipient to hold down a job.

AP
French help quell mutiny in former colony
Paris - France said it was protecting its 2,500 nationals in the Central African Republic (CAR) and none had been hurt in a mutiny by local troops in the capital, Bangui. French troops, part of a force based in the former colony, helped to quell the uprising, which killed three people.

It was the second uprising in two months; last month's was over pay late. The intervention is the latest in a series of France in its former colonies in Africa. France has about 1,400 soldiers and airmen in CAR, backed by four Mirage F-1 fighter-bombers and two transport planes. The CAR became independent in August 1960 and suffered a series of military and civilian dictatorships thereafter.

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Bank robber nabbed by the Internet
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Saint-Gaudens - The central Pyrenees has got its first bear in more than three decades: an import from Slovenia. It is the latest experiment in repopulating the wilder parts of developed countries with species that have been driven to extinction. The bear arrived in its new habitat after a 20-hour trip. Nervous and angry, it scrambled out of the cage and into thick forest, where the regional government has designated 35,000 acres of space. Officials are arranging to capture a male mate, also from Slovenia. French authorities passed an accord with 15 shepherds, who will receive compensation if the bears kill any of their animals.

Karadzic defies West by handing power to militant ally

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader who is wanted for alleged war crimes, defied Western governments this weekend by restructuring his government in a manner intended to reaffirm Bosnian Serb opposition to the Dayton peace agreement. The shake-up caused Mr Karadzic to relinquish some of his formal authority as president, but it appears unlikely that he is about to drop out of political life altogether.

It seems even more premature to suggest that the West is closer to bringing him to trial by the United Nations war crimes tribunal in The Hague. Moreover, even if Mr Karadzic were to step down in the near future,

there is little prospect that his successors would be any less committed to a policy of militant Bosnian Serb nationalism.

This became clear on Saturday after a pre-dawn meeting of the Bosnian Serb assembly in Pale, where Mr Karadzic secured the appointment of Gjoko Klickovic, a hardliner, as his new prime minister. He later announced he was delegating some of his own powers as president to Biljana Plavsic, an equally uncompromising nationalist.

Official newspapers in Serbia, which have been waging a relentless propaganda campaign against Mr Karadzic, carried headlines such as "Karadzic gone", suggesting he had been forced out of office. But independent political com-

mentators in Belgrade said the reshuffle in the ranks of the Bosnian Serb leadership did not necessarily amount to a loss of power by Mr Karadzic.

"It is not a serious change. I think that Biljana Plavsic, to the extent to which she will substitute for him, is hardly a change. She is very close to Karadzic. They are virtually the same," said Stojan Cerovic of the respected weekly *Vreme*.

Plavsic often sounded more radical than Karadzic. I think that Karadzic is retaining control and that it is no big concession towards greater cooperation," he added.

Aides of Carl Bildt, the international mediator who is responsible for implementing civilian aspects of the Dayton settlement, contested the view

that the leadership changes meant Mr Karadzic had given little away. "We believe that this is the beginning of the end of the influence of Dr Karadzic on the political scene. Mr Bildt is continuing to ensure that this sidelining of Dr Karadzic is ratified and consummated," Culum Murphy, a spokesman for Mr Bildt, said.

Failure to secure the removal from power of Mr Karadzic would gravely damage Mr Bildt's authority and undermine the Dayton agreement. The peace terms require Mr Karadzic and other indicted war criminals to give up public office and be turned over to the tribunal in The Hague. But the 60,000 Nato peace forces in Bosnia have not been entrusted with the specific task of

tracking down and arresting the accused men.

Mr Karadzic had stayed largely out of the public eye for several months until last Wednesday, when he engineered the dismissal of his prime minister, Rajko Kasagic.

Mr Bildt and Western governments had cultivated Mr Kasagic as an alternative Bosnian Serb leader, seeing him as a supporter of the Dayton settlement and a relative moderate on the Bosnian Serb political landscape.

His replacement, Mr Klickovic, made his views clear on Saturday when in his first public statement after his appointment, he said he saw no reason for Mr Karadzic to go on trial. He challenged another key point of the Dayton accord by

ruling out the early return of Muslim and Croat refugees to their homes in Bosnia Serb territory.

Mr Bildt and Western governments have urged the President of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, to help them force Mr Karadzic from power and bring him to trial. The Serbian leader, while no friend to Mr Karadzic, has played his hand cautiously, aware that to sacrifice his former protégé would enraged powerful nationalist forces in Belgrade.

Mr Milosevic has told Western negotiators that they should wait for Mr Karadzic to be defeated in Bosnia's first post-war elections due in September. However, apart from the fact that the Dayton agreement bars Mr Karadzic from standing in

the elections, the apparent aim of the Bosnian Serb leader is to stop the vote from taking place or, if it does happen, to destroy its legitimacy.

In a foretaste of these difficulties, a European Union official in the divided Muslim-Croat city of Mostar said on Saturday that elections to reunite the city would be postponed from their scheduled date of 31 May. Hans Birchler, legal adviser to the EU mission in Mostar, suggested the Muslims' refusal to field candidates was a reason. The Spanish head of the EU mission, Ricardo Perez Casado, later denied a decision to postpone the vote had been taken. Earlier this month, parties based in Muslim-held east Mostar failed to register by the deadline.



Plavsic: Said to be very close to Karadzic

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IN BRIEF

Yeltsin tries to cut deal with poll rival

Moscow - Boris Yeltsin said over the weekend that he had offered the market reformer Grigory Yavlinsky the chance to become first deputy prime minister in a future Russian government if he abandoned his own presidential ambitions and helped the Kremlin leader beat off a challenge from the Communist contender in next month's election, writes Helen Womack.

But Mr Yavlinsky was playing hard to get. Mr Yavlinsky, 44, who met the President on Thursday, denied he had demanded any specific post. Rather, he told Echo Moskva radio, he had pointed out to Mr Yeltsin policy changes he regarded as essential for the national good. He saw ending the war in Chechnya as the priority. The liberal economist also urged tax cuts and the break-up of monopolies. He called for the sacking of ministers associated with current economic policy and the attempt to bring Chechnya to heel, including the Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, and the Defence Minister, Pavel Grachev.

The bargaining between Mr Yeltsin and other politicians is likely to continue, probably until the first round of the election on the 16 June. If no candidate wins 50 per cent of the vote, a second round will be held, at which point Mr Yavlinsky and the others may throw their weight behind Mr Yeltsin to save Russia from a return to Communism.

Russian mafia godfather on trial in US

New York - Federal prosecutors hope the trial starting today of an alleged Russian mafia godfather accused of extorting money from a Wall Street investment firm will expose a much larger web of secrets about Russian organised crime in North America, writes David Osborne.

Vyacheslav Ivankov, 56, arrested a year ago in the Brighton Beach neighbourhood of Brooklyn, otherwise known as "Little Odessa" because of the many émigrés from the former Soviet Union who live there, is believed to be the most powerful Russian mobster to have set up operations in North America.

As well as pursuing extortion charges, prosecutors will try to prove his status as a boss in Brighton Beach's Russian underworld community and link him to crimes including bribery, money-laundering, drug-dealing and murder. "What makes this case important is involvement of members of organised crime at the highest levels," said Zachary Carter, US attorney in Brooklyn.

Italy rules out corporal punishment

Rome - Rejecting the appeal of a man who hit his 10-year-old daughter with a belt, Italy's Supreme Court has ruled that corporal punishment is no longer an acceptable way to educate children. Italian newspapers yesterday reported on the decision, handed down last week.

The court refused to overturn a Milan appeals court's conviction of the man on charges of improper punishment. The Supreme Court said corporal punishment, like slaps, kicks and hitting with a belt, even when inflicted to educate the child, should not be allowed. The high court was reversing itself on a ruling earlier this year that a group of adults charged with watching over children were not guilty of mistreatment when they disciplined children with a carpet-beater. The court, however, said other means of punishment should have been used.

French help quell mutiny in former colony

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AP
Bank robber nabbed by the Internet
Miami - One of the 10 most wanted US fugitives was arrested in Guatemala after an Internet user recognised his picture on the FBI's home page. Leslie Ishen Rogge, 56, an escaped bank robber, surrendered at the US Embassy in Guatemala City, said Paul Philip, special agent in charge of the FBI office in Miami. Rogge was flown to Miami, where he is scheduled to appear before a federal magistrate on charges of bank robbery, interstate transport of stolen property and wire fraud.

international

Tibet riots over ban on pictures of Dalai Lama

TERESA POOLE
Peking

Two violent clashes have taken place in Tibet this month between Chinese police and monasteries over tough new regulations that ban the display of photographs of the Dalai Lama in temples.

In the latest incident on 14 May, up to 80 Tibetans were injured, including many monks and nuns, according to reports from Lhasa. A week earlier, three monks were shot and injured during a disturbance at the Ganden monastery, 25 miles east of the capital, and at least 40 were arrested.

The details, obtained by the London-based Tibet Information Network (TIN), are the latest evidence of increased tensions as Peking tries to tighten its hold on the region.

The edict against the display of photographs in monasteries and temples of Tibet's exiled spiritual leader was published on 5 April. Hotels and restaurants were also told to remove the Dalai Lama's picture.

A month later on 7 May, a government work group was sent to Ganden monastery to implement the new regulation.

The monks protested. Fighting broke out between the groups, and police were called in. TIN said at least three of the 500 monks at Ganden were shot and wounded, and a fourth is in a serious condition after police struck his head.

The two main monasteries in Lhasa, Drepung and Ramoche, were sealed off by the Chinese authorities to stop the unrest spreading. The main temple in Tibet, the Jokhang, in central Lhasa, staged a one-day shutdown in protest, said TIN.

Details of the latest incident, on 14 May appear to confirm another confrontation over the picture-banning. This information was provided by a Japanese tourist who was looking after his sick American girlfriend at the Lhasa People's Hospital Number One.

At 11.30 that night two trucks loads of wounded monks and nuns were brought to the emergency unit, and about 30 women

and 15 men were off-loaded under police escort for treatment.

"They took the people out of one truck ... more than half of them young nuns. Some people were walking, some people could not walk. They were holding each other and some were crying and screaming," said Takeo Fujimoto, who contacted TIN after he reached Nepal.

"I am 100 per cent sure that somebody beat them up. It was not like a car accident. Their whole faces were sons and covered with blood, and some people could not move."

The second truck was driven off. "On the other truck I saw some legs hanging out from the back of the truck. They did not move," Mr Fujimoto said.

Those taken in the hospital

were mostly monks or nuns but there were also lay Tibetans. "One was a young girl who had been beaten in the face," Mr Fujimoto said. TIN suggested the confrontation took place at a pilgrimage site.

The latest edict categorises pictures of the Dalai Lama as "reactionary propaganda".



If the cap fits: Pope John Paul II has a change of headgear after a three-hour mass in Maribor, Slovenia, yesterday

Photograph: Darko Bandic

Catwalk queen trades pageants for power

Before 19-year-old Venezuelan Alicia Machado was crowned Miss Universe at the weekend, judges asked her whether it was better to be intelligent, wealthy or beautiful. Looking gorgeous and about to become quite rich, she did not bat an eyelid. "Intelligent, because then you can develop into many other things."

She might have been thinking about one of her compatriots and predecessors: 1981 Miss Universe Irene Saez. At 34, Ms Saez may no longer have the univers at her feet but she is living proof it's not all downhill from the top of the world. She is threatening to become the most famous Venezuelan since the country's 19th century liberator, Simon Bolivar.

The six-foot blonde is in her second term as mayor of the wealthy Caracas municipality of Chacao. She was re-elected recently with 96 per cent of the vote and is now a serious bet for president of Venezuela by 1998.

Ms Saez may have cast off the beauty-pageant image but "Irene" dolls, with cascading blonde locks, hazel eyes, ruby lips and pink lace frocks, are still top sellers with a 5-per-cent commission augmenting the mayor's salary.

Such is her reputation for running Chacao, a suburb of 185,000 residents, glitzy shops and upmarket restaurants, that the locals refer to it as "Ireneland" (Irene-land).

Her secret borrows from Thatcherism and pre-Mandela

LOCAL HEROES : 17

Irene Saez

South Africa, with a sprinkle of Marie Antoinette. But her constituents like it. In a country where around 60 per cent of voters usually do not turn out, they showed up massively in Chacao to re-elect her.

"No-one here's ever won 96 per cent. It's unheard of," she said. Like Baroness Thatcher, whom she met during her travel year as Miss Universe, she has a tendency to slip into the royal "we" or refer to herself. "Irene Saez has always said ..."

"People here didn't use to pay taxes. We showed them what the concrete fruits of taxes can be," she said.

Critics accuse her of a "let-them-eat-cake" mentality, looking after her own patch inhabited by "haves", while ignoring the vast majority of "have-nots". They say Chacao is the richest municipality in the country and that running it is a push-over.

Inside Chacao, however, "Irene" is Queen. Setting up her own police force she has slashed the crime rate and made her municipality one of the few safe districts of Caracas to walk in. Gone are the days when, instead of the wine list, you might be handed a piece of paper saying "put your cash and credit cards in this bag - now!"

Ms Saez has filled in potholes and employed cleaners to keep her district clean. She has set up a team of paramedics to make house calls to ailing or elderly residents and established a local orchestra and ballet school.

She was never a member of any party. With an eye on the presidency, however, she has started her own group. Its title, "Integration, Renovation and New Hope", may be clumsy but then she had to ensure the Spanish acronym was memorable: LRNE.

Phil Davison



Whoever: blah, blah black sheep have you any wool

KAMPALA DAYS

Ghosts that lurk in shadows of hotel's gory past

A journalist I know refuses to stay in the Nile Hotel in Kampala. Too many ghosts, he says.

During Milton Obote's reign of terror in the first half of the Eighties, the hotel – then called Nile Mansion – was used by the regime for interrogation and torture. No one knows how many people died or "disappeared" after being taken there.

Those suspected of supporting the guerrillas were viciously flogged. Mr Mukasa's wife was beheaded by government soldiers in 1981 and his brother was shot dead. After two years in exile near London, Mr Mukasa returned to Uganda only to be arrested by Obote's security service which mistook him – Mr Mukasa says – for Godfrey Binaisa who had been president for a short period between Amin and Obote.

Mr Mukasa still bears scars from the torture sessions in the Nile Hotel. His interrogators dripped burning plastic down his right leg to make him talk. Not surprisingly, he has not been back to the hotel since.

The Nile Hotel was a "slaughterhouse". I was later told by Brigadier Jim Muhwezi who, as head of internal security, now has an office in the adjacent conference centre. "A number of my friends were tortured and died there. It's hard to believe the beautiful gardens were once littered with bodies."

Those days are mercifully past and Kampala is now a model of enterprise. Though the economy is still only at the level it was in the early Seventies, Uganda now boasts the highest growth rate of any African country. The Nile Hotel is full of executives and business people. The basement of the conference centre is no longer a torture chamber, and rooms 211 and 233 are no longer the offices of Obote's dreaded Military Intelligence and National Security Services.

If there are ghosts here they are keeping well-hidden. But I know my journalist friend will not be checking in when next he is in Kampala. Nor will Mr. Mukasa be dropping by for Sunday lunch.

David Orr

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NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up 34.5% of the raw material for UK newspapers in 1995.

Source - Pulp & Paper Information Centre.

It's time the Tories gave the money back

The silence has been eloquent, significant and depressing. We cannot quite believe it. The Conservative Party has a clear-seeming policy about accepting donations. It was repeated yesterday by its chairman, Dr Brian Mawhinney. He said: "we do not accept funds with conditions attached from foreign governments, from anonymous donors and from criminal sources." But a day earlier, our sister paper, the *Independent on Sunday*, had revealed that the party knew nearly three years ago that £365,000 of a £400,000 donation from Asil Nadir, the disgraced businessman, was stolen money. This was not some loose allegation from a hostile journalist or Labour Party researcher. It was hard evidence in a report overseen by a senior partner at Touche Ross, a leading firm of accountants. One would have thought that taking stolen money went against the Conservative policy.

It is genuinely disturbing that the party has done no such thing. The first excuse, made privately to Touche Ross, was that the money had been taken "in good faith". How many people would consider this a decent reaction in their private lives? If the reader had taken a gift of money from a casual acquaintance, which later turned out to have been stolen from a third party, would you keep it, on the grounds that "I never knew"? But we

are talking, of course, not about a private individual, but about the party that has led Britain for many people's adult lifetime. Different standards should apply – higher ones. The second excuse, made to this newspaper yesterday, is that the Conservatives don't accept the connection made by Touche Ross is absolutely proven – but that if it went to court, they would abide by the court's decision. Well thanks a lot. As the party knows full well, the sum of money involved is not considered big enough to warrant the expense of a separate legal action. But the mere fact that the Conservatives are, in effect, saying that they won't hand back stolen money unless dragged through the courts and forced to do so is extraordinary.

Presumably the final line of defence will be that there were no "conditions attached" – the get-out clause carefully written into the party policy. But in the real world, that is not how things are done. There can be few if any shady characters who pay money into a party account in return for a written commitment to build this bypass or change this taxation rule. Even in bad political novels, such attempts to buy influence are represented as acts of delicate innuendo – nose-tapping, discreet-coughing exchanges in the corners of expensive restaurants.

The Conservative reluctance to hand back the Nadir money, and the party's

shameless attitude to the whole subject, provides the backdrop to the other new allegation, the *Sunday Times* report suggesting that Serb businessmen with connections to Radovan Karadzic, who is being sought to answer war crimes allegations, paid £100,000 to the party. At this stage, there are too many unanswered questions for anyone to make a final judgement – we don't know whether the unnamed businessman was a Serb nationalist or just a Serb. If the British Conservative Party really did take Serb-connected money at the height of the war, it would be a national

humiliation. The point is, however, that the Conservatives ask us to accept that they were acting in good faith and, while their own inquiries continue, should be given the benefits of any doubts.

In all honesty, how can they be? It is not as if the Serbian story or even the Nadir story, were one-off events. Let us put this in the kindest way possible: the Conservatives have not been spectacularly lucky in their choice of donors. There was Octav Botnar, the Nissan UK chief who fled to Switzerland. There was Mohammed Hashemi, the Iranian arms

dealer whose brothers were arrested in the United States. There was Kamlesh Paitni, wanted by the Nigerian police for fraud. There was Nazznu Virani, jailed in 1994 after being convicted for false accounting in the BCCI affair. And these, remember, are only a few names picked up by the press.

The time has passed when major political parties can be relied on to behave in a proper or gentlemanly fashion. As international business becomes ever more powerful, the need for national politicians to be very careful about their friends and donors becomes ever greater. To date, the Conservatives' stock response has been "we're innocent because we thought we were acting honourably". This is remarkably similar to the stock defence to the charges of misleading Parliament contained in the Scott report – "we didn't believe we were doing wrong, so we weren't". It is laughable, but serious, too. It is the dark fruit of too many years in office, too much power and too much privacy.

In the longer term, reform of party funding should begin by making all donations and loans to political parties matters which must be published. But in the short term there is one thing that the Conservatives should do to begin to clear their reputation in this matter. It is quite simple. It can happen this morning. Let's put it plainly: just give the money back.

May the V&A boxes tumble and prosper

I didn't take them long. No sooner had the Victoria and Albert Museum unveiled its plans for a remarkable extension, designed by a young American-Polish architect called Daniel Libeskind than the usual suspects got on their soap boxes to condemn it.

In case you haven't seen them, Libeskind's plans are for a building which breaks most boundaries of traditional form. It must resemble a jumble of boxes tumbling down into the pavement, yet suspended in mid-air.

Brian Sewell, the Linford Christie or outrage and indignation, was quick off the blocks. Bemoaning the lack of the comfortable classical logic of columns pediments and pilasters, Mr Sewell, populist polemicist and sometime art critic, ran it down as "an architectural absurdity masquerading as a museum wing".

If Mr Libeskind is feeling short of friends he shouldn't worry. We think the plans are great and we would love to see his stunning building built. We need more architecture of this kind – the aborted plans for Cardiff opera house spring to mind – not more Sewellian columns.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Labour's Research Fund plans

Sir: The article by Barron Clement ("Unions fund Labour by the back door", 18 May) is based on a series of factual inaccuracies.

The Labour Frontbench Research Fund (not "Shadow Cabinet Research Fund") has somewhere in the region of £40,000 in it, not £300,000.

It is not a "blind fund". We make public the contributors to it, and the Labour frontbench members who receive funding will declare that fact in the new Register of member's interests.

It can scarcely be used to "disguise" financial support paid by unions since we declare the names of all contributors. As it happens, the majority of contributions so far have come from individual businessmen or businesses.

Of course there would be grounds to object if 90 per cent of the fund came from one source. But it doesn't. The non-affiliated fund of Unison which used to make contributions to research by the Labour frontbench has not contributed in the fund.

The reason there is no entry in the Register yet by individual MPs is that there have been no payments out of the fund yet. As payments are made they will be entered in the Register. The new Register covers the current year rather than the past year.

The real facts are these: the public funding for the opposition frontbench (the Short money) is insufficient to pay for the research the opposition needs to keep the Government accountable. For decades therefore the opposition has had to supplement that with outside funding.

We have altered the way that the Labour frontbench handles its funding to meet the new Nolan rules. We have set up a central Labour Frontbench Research Fund after extensive discussion with Sir Gordon Downey, the new Parliamentary Commissioner, to make sure that it meets all the new rules.

Because we are anxious to ensure full transparency we have gone beyond what Sir Gordon advised us to do by making public the names of all contributors to the fund. We will meet any new rules proposed by Sir Gordon.

DONALD DEWAR MP
(Glasgow Garscadden, Lab)
House of Commons
London SW1

Time for the millennium

Sir: I am not surprised that the Millennium Exhibition is running into trouble ("An exhibition of ourselves", 17 May). The problem is not the concept, but the decision of the Millennium Commission to base it around the theme of "time".

The Great Exhibition of 1851 was a showcase for the best of British manufacturing and design. It had no theme as such except that it aimed to show the best of what Britain could produce. It made such a huge impact, partly because it was the first of its kind but also because of Joseph Paxton's pioneering Crystal Palace in which it was housed.

The Millennium Commission cannot expect British business simply to cough up vast sums of money for a vague concept. What



is needed is not for British Telecom to be a corporate sponsor but that they should agree to have a BT pavilion demonstrating the best of British telecommunications and the economic and social benefits they will bring in the 21st century.

The exhibition should be an opportunity for the best of British design, craftsmanship and the arts to be seen in a world audience.

Companies should seize the chance to exhibit their products and their vision in a showcase that millions will visit and that will be reported across the world.

The Millennium Commission should drop the theme idea and raise funds by selling space for pavilions at the site; that way the nation will get an exhibition worthy of the Millennium and businesses a return for their investment.

NICHOLAS KENT
London, SE1

Sir: Your article on Greenwich's Millennium plans ("An exhibition of ourselves", 17 May) neglects to mention the role of the National Maritime Museum and, more importantly, the Old Royal Observatory in the commemorations. While the Museum fully supports the plans for a Millennium exhibition on the Greenwich peninsula site, plans are already well in progress to mark the Millennium in historic Maritime Greenwich, whether or not the peninsula event occurs.

In the Old Royal Observatory, Queen's House and National Maritime Museum set among 200 acres of Greenwich Park, Greenwich has a spectacular, ready-made site of international

repute for Millennium celebrations. It should also be remembered that the reason for the choice of Greenwich for the national celebrations is the existence of the Prime Meridian, signalling the beginning of the Millennium for the world, by international decree.

Since the Millennium officially begins for the world on the Prime Meridian in the courtyard of the Observatory, the global focus will be on that historic building when the Millennium arrives.

RICHARD ORMOND
Director
National Maritime Museum
London SE10

Sir: You report that in Australia the most popular suggestion for celebrating the Millennium received by a federal government survey is writing local history. That makes an interesting contrast with the British Millennium Commission's view that research on and writing of local history for permanent publication is "not of sufficient public benefit" to deserve its support. Can it be that our people, unlike the Australians, have lost interest in their country's past because they fear that it has no future?

C R J CURRIE
General Editor, Victoria History of the Counties of England
London, WC1

Sir: Could you explain why 20 million people should want to go to Greenwich for the Millennium exhibition and how

they are expected to get there? Perhaps British business has a point in not being impressed by the proposed content of the exhibition, nor, given past experience, by the likelihood of any major infrastructure project in this country coming in on time and to budget.

Dr CELINA FOX
London, W9

Peking stifles democracy

Sir: I commend Robin Cook for his eloquent support of human rights and democracy in Hong Kong. His article ("How to hold China in our hands", 13 May) and his recent visit to Hong Kong demonstrate that Labour is both aware of the concerns of Hong Kong's 6.5 million people and prepared to show leadership in the remaining days until the transfer of sovereignty from Britain to China.

However, one of the central points in Mr Cook's article needs clarification. He states Governor Chris Patten introduced his modest electoral reforms (under which still only one third of the legislative seats – 20 of 60 – were elected democratically) "without even visiting Peking". It is clear that neither secret negotiations nor visiting the Chinese leaders would have resulted in their approval of democratic reform.

Since well before Chris Patten's 1992 arrival in Hong Kong, Peking's objective has been to stifle democracy in Hong Kong. China's intentions today are

equally clear: Peking has sworn to axe Hong Kong's elected legislature, replacing it with a fully appointed rubber stamp body (which Chinese leaders now say will be operating even before the transfer of sovereignty on 30 June 1997). Had Governor Patten allowed Chinese leaders to veto his reforms before he presented them to the people of Hong Kong, he would not only have doomed democracy before the British departure, but also have given China de facto control over all major decisions in Hong Kong before the transfer of sovereignty.

Though China pins the planned abolition of our elected legislature on Governor Patten this is little more than a smoke-screen for setting up its own appointed puppet legislature to pass repressive laws in Hong Kong. Otherwise China would be planning to hold elections immediately after assuming sovereignty.

Instead, Peking's appointed, so-called "provisional" legislature will operate for a year or more, with no terms of reference – or real guarantee of genuine elections at any time in the future.

MARTIN LEE, QC
Chairman
The Democratic Party
Hong Kong

Sir: David Walker's article (16 May) correctly identifies a serious problem regarding the funding of research in our universities. Unfortunately, his solution is

simplistic and a classic example of British short-termism.

Mr Walker correctly concludes that excellence in research is under threat, and he proposes to solve the problem by concentrating funding in perhaps ten elite universities, with the rest receiving little or no public support for research. While this might bring some short-term benefits, the long-term results will be wholly disadvantageous.

The most effective higher education based research engine is clearly that in the US (where there are about 800 "research universities"). This system depends quite explicitly on having a spectrum of activity, from the research-led flagships through many institutions with high levels of activity and pockets of excellence, to many teaching-only institutions. The effectiveness of the system depends on this continuum and the mobility between institutions that it facilitates. We are now moving towards a flexible continuum in the UK, which Mr Walker's approach would destroy.

The only way that we can protect and encourage excellence in UK research is through greater investment.

Professor R W JOYNER
Director of Research
The Nottingham Trent University
Nottingham

Elite universities

Sir: David Walker's article (16 May) correctly identifies a serious problem regarding the funding of research in our universities. Unfortunately, his solution is

any reform of the welfare state is the same as its abolition. The reality is that the welfare state is in desperate need of reform if it is to continue to service the needs of the people of our country. Those who oppose that reform jeopardise its future.

Chris Smith, MP, has consistently stated that the inclusion of those who cannot support themselves in the system is a must for any reform which he proposes. Furthermore, the package of measures which he is beginning to outline are not at odds with Beveridge and would probably be viewed by the Liberal reformer as very generous. For Beveridge, like Chris Smith, felt that it was the outcome, ie the abolition of poverty, which was more important than the means of delivery.

The alarmists who predict the end of the welfare state are correct to guard against those who seek that result, but should not regard every reform as an attack on the institution they honourably defend.

IAN CORFIELD
Head of Research
Fabian Society
London, SW1

Flights of fancy

Sir: The proposed Daniel Libeskind design for the Victorian and Albert Museum ("Fiver-a-head to visit 'exploding' museum", 18 May) resembles not so much a carbuncle as a hideous over-enlarged lump of crystal, unsuited to form a part of the nation's premier decorative arts museum.

The £5 entry fee announced by the museum trustees is yet another nail in the coffin of this country's tradition of free museum entry.

It would be particularly inappropriate for genuine researchers to be charged entry to the renowned print room of the V&A Museum, which also houses the National Art Library.

Excesses such as the purchase of the costly Canova marble, which at present is not even on show at the museum, and the departure in recent years of some of its more learned curatorial staff should not be compounded by the trustees' flights of fancy.

ALEC STIRLING
London, SW1

Committed fathers

Sir: Anna Coote is right to emphasise the importance to society of encouraging unmarried men to maintain their children when they have separated from the children's mother ("Feminists must back fathers", 17 May).

She is wrong, however, to think that there is no existing mechanism enabling such men to acquire full parental rights. Committed and involved fathers will almost always be granted parental responsibility orders by the courts.

The irony is that such orders usually result from applications which are contested by the mothers whereas those parents who wish to enter into parental responsibility agreements without the involvement of the courts find that the Government has recently introduced onerous regulations to be complied with before such agreements become official.

LYNN ROBERTS
Hodge Jones & Allen
Solicitors
London, NW1

Essential reform of welfare state

Sir: Walter Cairns (Letters, 17 May) perpetuates the myth that

the commentators

The special pleasures of your own agenda

In the age of e-mail and live TV conferences, people are discovering new benefits in meeting face to face

How do we reach out and talk to each other? Successful newspapers connect well with their readers and their readers with each other. The public may be cynical about the press but the relationship between a newspaper and its readers is intense. I should know. While editing this newspaper for its first eight years, I was constantly made aware of readers' feelings by letter, by telephone call and by direct comment at any gathering I attended.

Now, what about the newest medium, multimedia, which some people believe is distancing? I have experienced it at first hand by starting an electronic publishing business, one small enough for me to run from my house. Instead of journalists and printers, I work with interactive designers and programmers. We produce CD-Rom titles and we will shortly publish a pure Internet product. What I particularly like about the Internet, with its discussion groups, chat lines and free publishing, is that it includes people – the computer screen draws them together. I recently engaged in a radio discussion in which listeners put questions and comments both by phone and by e-mail; the two kinds

of talk worked together seamlessly. But it is more surprising, perhaps, that people still love public meetings. As I have discovered, the person who is completely at ease with the Internet and e-mail and telephone conferences is nonetheless quite prepared to attend a meeting in a public hall, just as our Victorian forebears would have done. It was when the *Independent* combined forces with Tony Benn some years ago and invited readers to a committee room in the House of Commons to discuss radical ideas for constitutional reform that I first thought that this appetite might exist. At the time, I wasn't sure that we would attract more than a handful. In the event, 600 people turned up and many had to stand at the back. The discussion was lively; first to speak after Mr Benn was a student who in turn was followed by a retired sea captain.

The clinching evidence is now before us in the monthly meetings that have been taking place since January at the Central Hall, Westminster to discuss London's future. Attendances have varied from 1,500 and 2,500. Again, our first

estimate of the likely audience was much lower – 300 or so. Last Wednesday, when the subject was London's transport arrangements, 1,500 people turned up. The proceedings began at 6.30pm and last two hours. You go after work and you may not finally reach home until well beyond 9 o'clock.

The events that people enjoy attending are invariably participatory, and the new ways of running meetings are built on this insight. Because what the audience may have to say is as important as the points the invited speakers will make, I greatly dislike the traditional format of set-piece speeches from the platform, one after the other, followed by a few questions at the end. *De haut en bas*.

We have avoided that at the Central Hall. Granted, there is still a platform with the main speakers, but contributions from the audience come between speeches and are given an equal amount of time. In this way the expert opinions form a framework for the evening's discussion. But I couldn't persuade my fellow trustees to go the whole way and place all the speakers in the audience with only a moderator on the platform. Perhaps rightly, they

demurred. What I was seeking was the feeling that on this subject, in this hall, for an hour or two, we are all equal – the expert and the citizen meet on common ground.

I have found that the most adventurous experiments in helping people to talk creatively to each other are occurring in private settings, rather than public meetings. You may, for instance, be invited to a two-day "let's think about the future" session of your organisation. Maybe you are a senior executive

who expects to be consulted. Maybe you are a junior manager whose opinions are generally dismissed. Maybe you are a shop-floor worker who does not expect to be asked for your opinion about anything. Whatever your status, you will have been told surprisingly little about the event other than its theme or objective – no agenda, no briefing papers.

On entering the room where the session is to be held, you will find that the chairs are placed in a circle or in concentric circles. In the middle, rather than your boss, is a moderator you have never seen before. On one wall of the room hangs a large noticeboard. A number of desks with computers, perhaps 10 machines if there are 200 of you, have been placed to one side. Down a corridor, there will be a number of small rooms that can also be used.

There is no agenda because the participants, sitting in a circle, will be asked to work out one for themselves. Any one of you may suggest a subject and invite interested colleagues to join you to discuss the issue and then write up an agreed version (hence the desk-top computers). You post your agenda item on the board in an empty time-slot, and participants then decide which

working sessions they wish to attend. The self-selected agenda is now being tested in the market place. If nobody comes to the subject meeting that you have proposed, perhaps you merge it with another or conclude it wasn't a very smart idea after all; or, if you wish, you can use the time to write up a proposal on your own.

When, after the two days, these meetings are done, you come together around the moderator, consider what you have achieved and depart with the proceedings of the entire conference in your hand – instant gratification. What are these strange events? They are an American import known as Open Space events; and organisations as wildly diverse as the BBC, the Engineering Council, ICI and the University of Surrey have recently

adopted the technique.

There is no reason why the electronic age should be inimical to these sorts of events. Indeed, quite the reverse. The fact that many of us spend our working lives in front of computer screens and then go home and relax with television or even fire up our personal computers and roam the Internet lends plausibility to the revival of the big meeting. It is like the special pleasures of the theatre after regular cinema-going. I am thrilled by what is happening to the television and the computer in the home and new ways of person-to-person brainstorming of issues, but it is the strange revival of the public meeting that particularly captivates me.



ANDREAS WHITTAM SMITH

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A cowardly business

On the stormy battlefield of Europe where are the captains of industry when they are needed?



POLLY TOYNBEE

A rain-sodden reception terrace the other day with the marquee flapping in the wind, the European Movement presented a plucky but somewhat beleaguered spectacle at its annual party. As the Europhobic storm gathers pace, are they ready to fight back?

They are a gentle, sensible lot, a mix of some of the old buffers of all parties who fought the good fight back in the 1975 referendum and keen young people, mainly Labour. But, it must be said, many have the slightly *distrait* air of intellectual Don Quixotes – not the bare-knuckle fighters needed for a dirty fight in the ring with Sir James Goldsmith.

The trouble with these rational Europhiles is that they have drunk deep of the company of the best and brightest of European brains at Anglo-German Konigswinter conferences. The European idea courses so naturally through their blood with

the Gewurtztraminer that they may forget the real battle for the hearts and minds of the British voter. After discussing the far horizons in Euro think-tanks, they find it hard to attend to the inane buffoonery of Teresa Gorman, Jimmy Goldsmith and Bill Cash.

Giles Radice, seizing hold of this venerable organisation founded by Winston Churchill, is assembling a credible battle line with cohorts from each party, but this is the only serious, unequivocal, pro-European campaign making the case. The rest is silence.



The enthusiasm shown by some on last week's Euro Day is yet to be publicly demonstrated by Britain's business leaders

Photograph: Murdo MacLeod

prices) £6.6m to spend on a brilliant, high-profile campaign. The antis were weak and impov- erished with only \$600,000 to spend. Money matters.

Virtually all CBI members and leading businessmen believe our future lies only in Europe, and that we must be serious and influential players. With 58 per cent of our exports going to Europe, that is hardly surprising.

Industrialists have in the past two months shown some small signs of awakening from their stupor of cowardice, frightened by the way the Europhobes have been shooting into an open goal. Adair Turner, head of the CBI, has made some rousing speeches dismissing "the little Englander fantasy as a product of cloud-cuckoo land". The CBI has organised a high-profile series of conferences up and down the land, starting in a fortnight, at which big hitters of industry will speak up for Europe.

But British captains of industry remain reluctant to lead from anywhere other than the

recedent rear. They are exceedingly difficult to tempt on to television or to enter the political fray. In Britain they have never taken their proper place as responsible public figures who wield a large amount of politically unaccountable power.

In Europe their counterparts play a key part in national life, here they prefer a quiet word in the corridors of power.

Programmes such as the BBC's *Newsnight* constantly request industrialists to speak on Europe and other relevant political and economic matters, but they usually refuse. "The business culture in Britain puts the interests of their shareholders first, ahead of considerations of the wider society," says Peter Horrocks, editor of *Newsnight*. "They fear being drawn into politics and won't appear on programmes to debate with politicians."

He cites a telling example: a *Newsnight* item discussed a possible successor to the ERM, short of full EMU. The head of Peugeot in France was eager to

explain why he felt Britain's Black Wednesday devaluation had created an unfair advantage for British cars in the French market. But the head of Rover declined to reply.

Adair Turner agrees that it is difficult to get industrialists to

give their views on television. "They had hoped the talk of withdrawal from Europe would burn itself out, but now they see they have to speak up, at least at our conferences." There is another unspoken problem: most industrialists are Tory and are uneasy about widening a rift that may end up destroying their own party. They say, off the record, of course, they would speak out if there was a real threat of withdrawal, but not until then.

But business is in the best position to explain about Europe. For example, Turner says, business wants the single market to progress rapidly. That means more regulation, not less. The "bonkers bureaucrats of Brussels" should be urged to press ahead. For British Airways, British Telecom and the energy industries are among those successful businesses still waiting for Europe to abolish unfair state subsidies so we can compete on a level playing field. More regulation often works in our favour, not against. But who is standing up to say so, in ways that the public can understand? Who is buying newspaper advertising space to explain what the single market means? Not those who have the most to lose.

Conventional politics fail on this issue. Every time a Tory pro-European speaks up, they hear the sound of tearing as another rip appears in their party's flimsy fabric. Not surprisingly, they speak low and in code. Labour has its own dilemma: with good European credentials established by Blair, shouldn't they now keep quiet and let the Tories rip themselves apart? So they too are muted. The LibDems protest that they speak out all the time, but the press hems their speech when they talk European.

That there are differences of opinion about EMU in 1999 does not excuse the hugely pro-European British establishment for letting the most important political issue of the day fall into the rogue hands of Goldsmith, Gormain, Murdoch and Conrad Black. Cowardice paralyses those who should now be strapping on their armour and clashing their shields for the European idea. The antis move their battle lines forward unchecked. The European movement is passing the baton round big business – and they had better start putting in serious money. They had better join it, swell its ranks, and make it win. If they prevaricate much longer, the battle will be lost before they ever take to the field.

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Two religions, one set of challenges

Muslims and Christians should join in *jihad* against common problems, says Akbar Ahmed

Bismillah 'r-Rahman 'r-Rahim, these words are used by millions of Muslims every day, that is, millions of times a day we hear the words that Allah – or God – is the Beneficent, the Merciful; this in essence is the spirit of Islam.

In spite of what you may read in the papers and see on TV, Islam is a religion of peace and compassion. Indeed the word Islam derives from the word for peace. Shortly before his death the prophet spoke at Arafa. He emphasised the unity of humanity and the need to respect others: "God has made you brethren one to another, so be not divided. An Arab has no preference over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab; nor is a white one to be preferred to a dark one, nor a dark one to a white one."

Many people do not appreciate that there is a close ideological and theological relationship for Muslims between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The basis of belief is the same. All three religions believe in the notion of the one divine God; they also believe that we are

mortals temporarily put here on earth and that there is accountability for our actions, an afterlife. The Koran repeatedly points out that both Jews and Christians are "people of the Book". Indeed for Muslims the prophets of Judaism and Christianity are also their prophets.

It is well to remember that when Muslims are being persecuted in Makkah in the early days of Islam, the holy Prophet sent them to the Christian land of Abyssinia, confident that they would find hospitality there. Late in the 20th century many Muslims again find refuge in the Christian – or at least partly Christian – land of Britain. These days I often wonder about the fate of those Muslims if a Michael Howard had been waiting for them in Abyssinia.

There are many steps that can be taken to help understanding between Islam and the West but the effort needs to come from both sides. A basic knowledge of Islam could be taught in Western schools so that children do not grow up in ignorance of it; ignorance breeds

fear and prejudice. Conversely, Western values, like democracy, need to be explained in Muslim schools; also that the West has more to offer them than just sex and violence, the Muslim stereotype of the West.

Muslims must convince the world that the media images of them as law-breaking and violent people are not true; that foreign embassies, diplomats, travellers and non-Muslims are safe in their countries. These acts are one way of capturing the headlines but they are not Islamic in content or spirit. The fight against injustice and oppression must continue, but must take other forms. There are also too many stories of human rights violations in Muslim lands. Minorities feel threatened and vulnerable. This is not in the spirit of Islam.

How many know (and this question is also posed to Muslims) that the notion of the greater *jihad*, commonly misunderstood as an aggressive act of religious war in the West, which derives from the word to strive, was explained by the Prophet as the attempt to con-

trol our own base instincts and work towards a better, more harmonious world? The lesser *jihad* is to battle physically for Islam; that too only against injustice.

The common problems in our world need to be identified: drug and alcohol abuse, divorce, teenage violence and crime, ethnic and racist prejudice, the problems of the aged and the poor, the challenge of the growing sense of uncertainty and rampant materialism: the sexual debasement of women and children; the depletion of our natural resources and ecological concerns. On all these issues, Islam takes a strong, enlightened position. This is the real Islamic *jihad* and, if it is properly harnessed and understood, it can provide fresh, sorely needed strength to these most crucial of global issues.

This article is excerpted from a sermon preached last night at Selwyn College Cambridge. The writer's book 'Living Islam: from Samarkand to Stormont' (1995) is published by BBC-Penguin.

Hunting down the Asian tigers

Over the last year, the Asian tigers have arrived in Britain. At the Tory conference last autumn, John Major launched the idea of Britain as the enterprise centre of Europe, or to put it another way, that we should see ourselves as Europe's tiger. Not to be outdone, Tony Blair has peppered recent speeches with references to the Asian tigers. In January, he made the trip to East Asia in what has almost become a pilgrimage for politicians: Europe has become a problem and East Asia some kind of Mecca.

The most dramatic conversion, though, has been that of Chris Patten, the Governor of Hong Kong and sage of the Tory left. Until last November, and despite having been out in the region since 1992, he had almost nothing to say about what we might learn from Asia; his pronouncements had been overwhelmingly concentrated on what Asia could learn from Britain.

Then, in a U-turn, he suggested that the economic success of the Asian tigers cannot be unrelated to the fact that governments in these countries spend 25 per cent or less of GDP compared with more than 40 per cent in Europe. He shows no sign of repenting. In an interview for *The End of the Western World* on BBC2 last night, he suggested that European governments would be forced to move in the direction of the Asian tigers much quicker than anyone currently imagines.

We should not exaggerate

Government in East Asia does not assume anything like the same responsibility for welfare

what this political interest in Asia means. But placed in historical context, this assumes a broader significance. Traditionally, British politicians have looked to the United States and western Europe for inspiration and example. For the last 150 years, with the exception of Japan, which was the only non-western country to commence its industrialisation in the 19th century, Europe and the US have enjoyed a monopoly of modernity. For a while parts of the left looked to the former Soviet Union, but this was always a minority interest. The idea that the political mainstream should look beyond the traditional advanced world is something new.

It is a reflection of the growing power and success of East Asia. We are witnessing the first signs of a new cultural traffic; in the past, the flow has overwhelmingly been from west to east. In the future it will increasingly be from east to west. It is the beginnings of the Asianisation of western politics.

The underlying force at work is the economic transformation of East Asia. There is no need to repeat in detail what is already fairly familiar. The original Asian tigers – those that commenced their economic ascent in the Fifties – now enjoy living standards comparable to southern Europe. It is these countries – Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong – that have been attracting most attention. They have gone from rural back-

wardness to industrial modernity in four decades. It took us two centuries.

The second tier, such as Malaysia, whose take-off began in the Seventies, are advancing in leaps and bounds. But it is the third tier, including China and Indonesia, that promises to tilt the world on its axis in the next century.

Who knows where East Asia will be in 50 years' time? The future can never be extrapolated from current trends, however secure they seem to be. The triumphalist mood that suffused East Asian growth two or three years ago has given way to a more sombre debate.

Paul Krugman, the Stanford economist, for example, has argued that the Asian miracle is nothing exceptional, but simply the predictable consequence of throwing large amounts of labour and capital at the production process. He is too pessimistic. Unlike the old Soviet bloc, the Asian tigers are climbing up the technological tree. By the early years of the next century, the more advanced tigers will be not far short of Western levels of development. The centre of gravity of the global economy has already shifted eastwards; that process will continue apace. For almost half a millennium, Europe and latterly the United States have enjoyed a virtual monopoly of modernity: that era is coming to a close.

So far the claims for the Asian tigers have been confined to their economic power. But with economic power comes political and cultural influence.

Asia will come to assert that, though it will take time, Japan is an interesting case in point. Over the last 20 years it has achieved Western levels of development – in some areas it is the world leader – but its political and cultural influence still lags well behind its economic power. Slowly that will change.

As yet, the tigers certainly don't think in these terms. Their ebullience is all about growth rates and economic ambition. The idea that they can teach us a thing or two is still a fairly alien concept for them. This is hardly surprising. Historically their relationship with the West has been based on respect and a desire to learn. They have looked westwards for inspiration for centuries. They still think of themselves as learners rather than exemplars. But there are already signs of change. Growing economic confidence is beginning to find expression in a rediscovery of national and the regional identities.

Modernisation in these countries is a highly complex process, a constant interaction of the national and the global, the Asian and the Western. It is certainly quite wrong to think that as these countries modernise, they will get more and more like us. The heyday of Western influence in Taiwan, for example, was probably the Seventies and early Eighties. Since then, the country has increasingly tended to look to East Asia, not least Japan and Hong Kong, for its lead.

The West, for its part, has also been slow to think in terms of Asia as a political and cultural force. For centuries, the West has enjoyed a virtual monopoly of modernity. We never dreamt that we could learn anything from what we have seen as colonies, former colonies, or simply backward countries and cultures. We are not accustomed to the idea that we will increasingly have to share modernity with another continent and very different cultures.

Learning how to imitate and borrow from the rest of the world has been the main strength of East Asia's booming economies, argues Martin Jacques



The answer is ... blowing in the wind section

OBSCURE INSTRUMENTS OF THE ORCHESTRA

A continuation by Dr Arnold Weiskopf of his occasional survey of the less well-known corners of the symphony orchestra.

75. The Clavicorn. A brave but doomed attempt to combine the pianoforte family and the reed family, this is not unlike a very large clarinet with a keyboard. "A piano that may be blown through will have the ultimate advantage of portability," said the inventor, Zwemmling, in 1820. What he hadn't realised was that unless you only played one note at a time, it would take three or four people blowing it simultaneously to get a noise out of it. If clavicorn pieces are ever played these days, the part is usually taken by a dozen clarinetists.

76. The Viola. The violino is the very little-known member of the string family that comes between the viola and the cello. "The cello and the double bass

rest on the floor," said Kirschner, "and the violin and the viola rest on the shoulder. It surely stands to reason that there must be an intermediate instrument which is played on the lap or between the knees." This was the violello, which produced a most beautiful tone somewhat like, in Bernard Shaw's words, "an Irish tenor performing to an all-female audience". It died out in the 1900s, and all the jokes hitherto told about violello players were henceforth told about viola and banjo players.

77. The Saxophone. Adolph Sax invented many instruments, some of which have become obsolete with time. Only the saxophone, however, lies at the bottom of the Atlantic ocean. The Belgian inventor was fascinated by the sound of the loud, ringing, plucked instruments favoured by black Americans – the banjo etc – and with his usual restless mind devised a combination of the banjo and saxophone, which could be heard three miles away on a clear night. He shipped a cargo of these redoubtable instruments over

to America for experimental sale but the ship went down in a fierce storm off the Florida Keys, taking with it all the known examples of the saxophone. Legend has it that on stormy nights off the Florida coast you can hear a ghostly band of saxophones playing "Stormy Weather" in G, which seems unlikely, as the song was not written till 100 years after the shipwreck.

78. Opera Obscura. Not strictly speaking a musical instrument, but a device which in its day had some fame and should perhaps be brought back. It catered for those unfortunate who were sensitive enough to enjoy the sight of the opera but not the sound. It was discovered

that if you made a small hole in the back of an opera house, the image of the performance within could be transmitted on to a screen in a room at the back, in the manner of a "camera obscura". This meant that those who wished to enjoy the spectacle but be spared the warbling could sit behind the opera house and watch everything that happened on stage, albeit upside down.

Incidentally, we have had a couple of letters from classical music lovers with genuine queries which Dr Arnold Weiskopf is happy to answer.

Dear Dr Weiskopf, There is a reference to a bassoon in Jilly Cooper's latest interesting work about the orchestra, *Appassionata*. What kind of instrument is this?

Dr Arnold Weiskopf writes: There is indeed a genuine kind of wind instrument called a bassoon, but in this novel it seems to refer to a kind of veterinary device used to give dogs an enema. Miss

Cooper is, as you know, a lover of dogs and she seems to have been misled by the existence of a breed of dog known as a basset hound into thinking ... well, into thinking something or other.

Dear Dr Weiskopf, The famous percussionist Evelyn Glennie is always described as being "profoundly deaf", yet in interviews she seems to hear everything that is said and to talk normally. How can this be?

Dr Arnold Weiskopf writes: Like many musicians, Miss Glennie often sends in a "dep" to do her more wearisome gigs for her. In her case, this certainly covers her radio interviews and TV trips so we can be sure that when we hear her speaking, it is not her but someone Scottish who hears and speaks perfectly normally.

However, I am sure that she fulfills all her musical engagements in person, as it is not particularly necessary for an orchestral player to hear what your colleagues are doing, and can often be a disadvantage.

Miles Kington



It would be wrong, however, to think that the rise of East Asia will be a re-run of earlier periods of British or American hegemony. The new era of globalisation promises to be different and more interesting. There will be no simple hierarchy or pecking order. Instead, the world will be a far more complex place, there will be many players, intense competition and a constant process of borrowing, learning and leapfrogging. Modernity in the 20th century will be a hybrid drawing on many different cultures, traditions and role-models.

One reason is that ideas now travel around the globe with incredible speed. Guangdong province in southern China combines the traditional with the modern in a way that was unthinkable even a decade ago. Another reason is that intensifying global competition forces countries to go in search of best practice wherever it may be found. No country can afford to ignore it for too long.

A classic example was Japan's lean production revolution. It set a new benchmark for manufacturing. Every car firm throughout the world, for example, was forced to copy or die. The argument that European governments should emulate the tigers and spend a smaller proportion of GDP is an acceptance that global competition imposes constraints on every nation. That doesn't mean that every government will spend the same proportion of GDP, but there will be a levelling tendency. The new global order will contain two contradictory and countervailing pressures, one towards homogeneity and the other towards diversity.

The growing interest displayed by British politicians in the Asian tigers is a welcome development. Nations that succeed in future will be those that are porous to new ideas from wherever they may come. So far, though, it must be said, that interest has been of a pretty predictable and instrumentalist kind. The tigers have been treated as a political football. The Conservatives have tried to appropriate them as living proof that free market ideas work. Labour, in response, has pointed to the role of the state in the transformation of these countries. This is all primitive stuff. The truth is that the tigers are quite different from Europe.

It is impossible to read these societies in terms of the traditional fault-lines of British politics. These societies come from different histories and are rooted in different cultures from our own. To reduce their significance to party-political point-scoring is to miss the point. The challenge is far bigger than this kind of argument can ever admit.

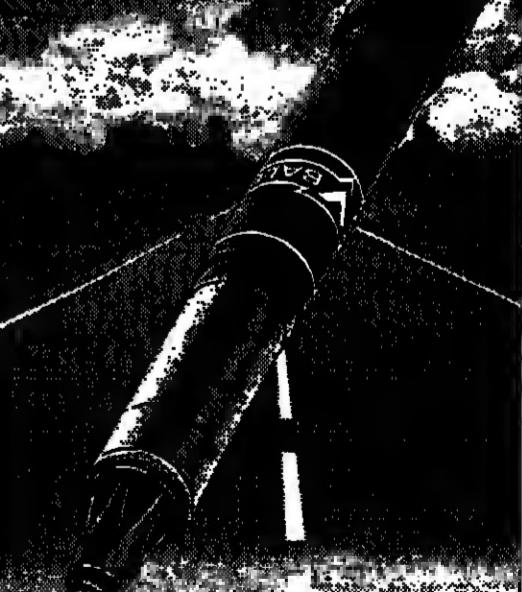
Take the question of the state, for example. It is certainly true that government in all the

These countries are addicted to change and are prepared constantly to reinvent themselves

learn lock, stock and barrel from the Asian tigers. Without much doubt they have been the most successful economies in the world over the last few decades. And the key to their success has been a willingness to learn from the rest of the world, a thirst for innovation, and a strong sense of national priorities.

They are immensely dynamic societies, addicted to change and prepared constantly to reinvent themselves. In contrast, we remain insufficiently porous to the outside world, resistant to change and weighed down by a past which consistently thwarts efforts to redefine ourselves. If we could learn to be a little more like them, it would be greatly to our advantage.

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obituaries/gazette

Ed Love

Ed Love is not a name well known even to those film-lovers who take notes from the creative credits which flash by all too quickly in the cinema. Television is no help, either, often cutting off credit titles or squashing them into unreadable portions of the screen while ushing the rest of the space to advertise whatever is coming next. This is especially true of cartoon credits, where even resorting to videos and freeze-frames does not always help. This is even sadder for a long-term animator like Ed Love, whose early work was never credited anyway, and whose later work may well be lost thanks to Hanna-Barbera's latest practice of crediting every name in the company but in ultra-rapid frame flashes.

Fortunately for cartoonists, keen enthusiasts of the genre have in recent times been probing into the men and women behind the scenes, publishing articles, interviews and even books about Hollywood's golden age of animation, and whilst the bulk of an animator's work may never now be known, at least a milestone arises here and there to mark the progress of a special talent from rough pencilings to the height of colour and humorous movement. One such master was Ed Love.

Love's 55-year career in animated cartoons began back in Los Angeles in 1930. It was the height of the American Depression and the 18-year-old college leaver with some talent as a cartoonist waded through the Classified Telephone Directory searching for a real professional to give him some tips on how to get work. He chanced on an animator who worked for the Walt Disney Studio and whose assignment at the time was on a Mickey Mouse short. He gave the teenager a chance to try

making Mickey play the violin and then fall over. Young Ed had a go, nervously showed the result to Disney himself, and was promptly hired as an assistant animator at \$18 a week.

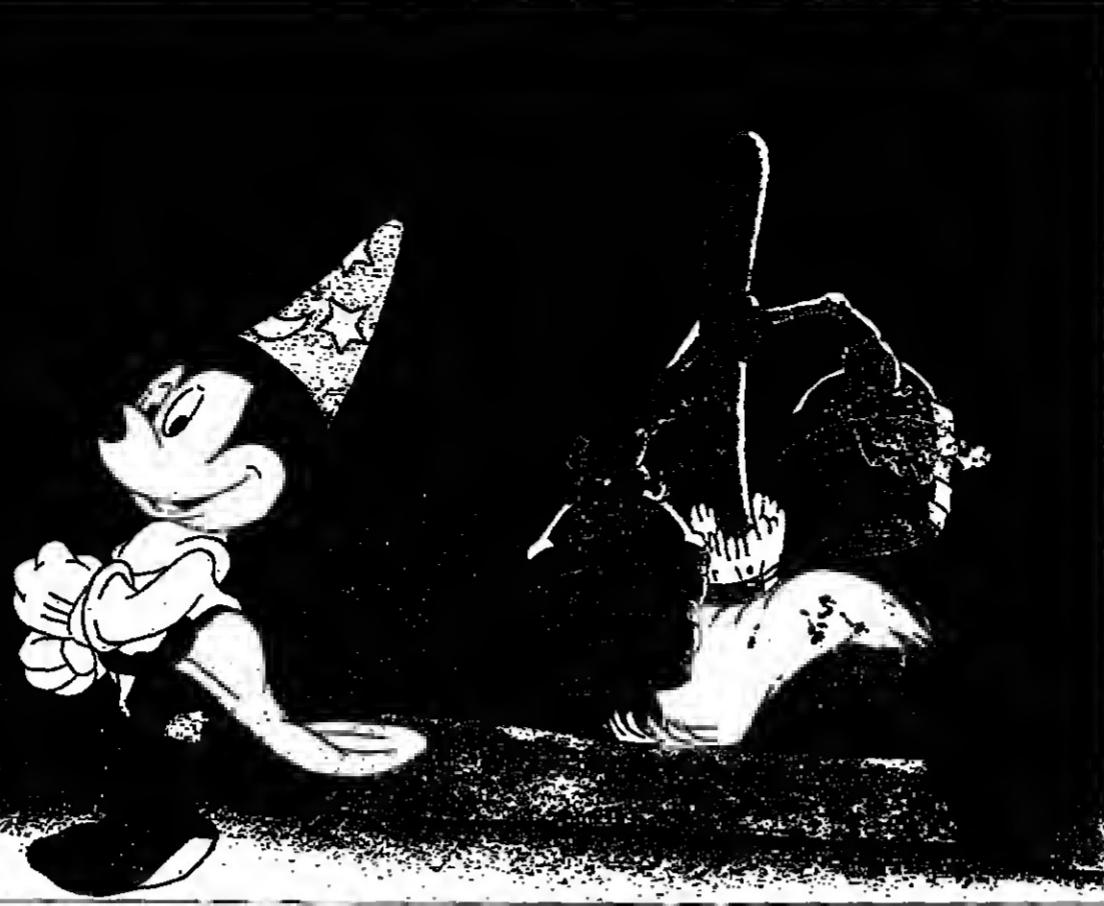
From Love's Disney days, one short emerges above all others. This was *Flowers and Trees*, not the first-ever film in the "Silly Symphony" series, but the first to be filmed in glorious Technicolor. It was released in July 1932, and won for Walt his first-ever Academy Award. The director was Burt Gillett, and Love animated an evil tree who kidnapped a pretty young sapling.

Much later, Love's name

cropped up on the credits of perhaps Disney's greatest ever feature film, *Fantasia* (1940). This pioneering attempt to bring life to a selection of popular classics was regarded as Disney's greatest folly, especially by the moneymen of Hollywood, but it has stood the test of time and marks the first film use of stereophonic sound.

Leopold Stokowski, who conducts the orchestra behind the picturisation of Paul Dukas' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, concludes this dramatic sequence by appearing in silhouette and shaking Mickey Mouse's hand. Interestingly, this piece was designed to be a super "Silly Symphony" on its own, and was so successful that during production it expanded into the full-length feature that became *Fantasia*. And it was on this sequence that Ed Love animated.

Love then moved across to the MGM cartoon studio under producer Fred Quimby. He joined the unit headed by Fred Avery, nicknamed "Tex", one of several animation geniuses developed by Warner Bros who found better self-expression elsewhere. Here Love became



Cartoon master: Love animated *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* sequence in *Fantasia*, 1940

a valuable addition to Avery's unit, right from their first production, *Blitz Wolf* (1942). This haywire piece of propaganda rallied Disney's *Der Führer's Face*, which copied the Oscar mainly because of its hilarious anti-Hitler song, punctuated with ripe raspberries. Love animated many of Avery's best shorts, including the howlingly saucy *Red Hot Riding Hood* (1943), a top favourite with GIs everywhere and *Screwy Squirrel* (1944), which established Scrwy Squirrel as a mainstream Avery madcap.

At MGM, Love was one of a team of four animators: Preston Blair, Ray Abrams and Irvin Spence. Other crazy

characters this team brought to life included Droopy Dog, the half-pint hound who introduced himself with "Hello, folks - I'm the hee-ro!", and the large and small bears called George and Junior, who were caricatures of the principal protagonists in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. This pair of bears starred in such titles as *Red Hot Rangers* (1947), which would prove to be Love's last film at MGM.

Love then moved over to the Walter Lantz studio, where Woody Woodpecker cartoons were made. Once a major force in animation, Lantz had started to sink after Universal closed their distribution deal and Uni-

versal Artists, a leading independent, took over. Love worked with Fred Moore, a famous name in cartooning who had been dismissed by Disney. Serving under the director Dick Lundy, they brought their superior skills to bear on *Playful Pelican* (1948). Starring Lantz's second-dunting hero, Andy Panda, this failed to breath new life into the little animal, who was promptly retired.

Lantz, nearing the end of his UA contract, never knew whether his studio would last into the following week, and the dithering delays unsettled Love. He quit animation for a while, then found a new home in television, at an adult audience, and on its futuristic follow-up, *The Jetsons* (1962). Not the same as Disney's, or Avery's or even Lantz's, but at least it was work.

Denis Gifford

Edward Love, animator: born Espaly-St-Marcel, Haute-Loire 10 June 1900; died Royes-en-Margeride, Clermont-Ferrand 6 May 1996

Maurice Montel

18 June 1940 is regarded as a great date in French history. It was then that General de Gaulle broadcast from London that Free France would continue to fight against Germany. 10 July 1940 is regarded as a shameful date in French history. It was then that the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, meeting together as a National Assembly in Vichy, voted full powers to Marshal Pétain. This marked the beginning of the Vichy state, the so-called National Revolution, and cooperation with the Germans.

But there was a bright side to 10 July. In an atmosphere of panic and passion, when pacifism was the only ideology present and when fear of the Germans and hatred of the English were the dominant feelings, there were 80 members of the Assembly who had the courage to vote against the proposed law which was presented by Pierre Laval with the reported support of Marshal Pétain. Maurice Montel was the last of that distinguished group of patriots.

One had to be courageous to vote against Laval's law. Enormous trouble had been taken to round up as many senators and deputies as possible, and both the German occupying forces and General Franco's government had helped many of them to get to Vichy in time. It had been decided that those who abstained from voting would have their names published. The Casino at Vichy, where the Assembly met, was heavily guarded and once proceedings had begun, no one could leave. No proper debate was held and one deputy who rose to speak was literally forced to sit down.

Above all, Laval had prepared the meeting with his customary skill. He had been lavish with promises and many were led to believe that they, or their

families, would be rewarded with posts. Others had to be content with the assurance that Pétain appreciated their qualities and valued their co-operation.

Montel was singled out for particular attention, and it appears that if he had accepted to vote for the proposal he would have been offered a ministerial post. This was probably because he and Laval knew each other, both coming from the region of Clermont-Ferrand. But more particularly because Montel was a member of a small political group which called itself "la gauche indépendante" and which had aspirations of independence from the old political groupings. Laval was right to be apprehensive about this group since of the 11 deputies who were elected in 1936, six voted against the motion, whilst of the 152 socialist deputies only 29 voted against (including, of course, Léon Blum, who Montel knew well).

After the war in 1940, Montel served in the army and won the Croix de Guerre. After 10 July he worked in insurance before joining the Resistance and was decorated for his work there. With the Liberation he was re-elected as a deputy in the Cantal where he had been elected, at Saint-Flour, in 1936. However, after a short time he preferred to abandon politics and go into business. This son of peasants was very successful, becoming a director of several insurance companies.

Douglas Johnson

Maurice Montel, politician and businessman: born Espaly-St-Marcel, Haute-Loire 10 June 1900; died Royes-en-Margeride, Clermont-Ferrand 14 May 1996

Johnny "Guitar" Watson

When Johnny "Guitar" Watson joined the archive of disastrous rock, Frank Zappa, on the road, it was a bit like Muddy Waters joining Karl-Heinz Stockhausen (or, to mention a similarly unlikely teaming that actually happened, when the Chieftains joined John Cage on stage). But Watson was said to have been the sentinel figure on Zappa's own guitar playing, and anyway Zappa's admiration for the more hard-core blues players was well known, as witness his hiring blues fiddler Sugarcane Harris to play with the Mothers of Invention in the early Seventies.

Surprisingly, when Watson recorded with Frank Zappa later that decade, it was mostly on vocals ("One Size Fits All", "Them Or Us", and "Thing-Fish") that we heard him on record, though he played some mean riffs on the live version of the scatological "In France" on the album *FZ Meets the Mothers of Prevention*.

For Watson's part, one of the songs on his 1993 album, *Bow Wow* - his first for 13 years - was supposedly dedicated to Zappa. Born in Houston, Texas in 1935, Watson was influenced by the pioneer of electric blues, T-Bone Walker, first recorded as Young John Watson, had a Top

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As well as touring with Williams, Watson also worked with Big Jay McNeely, Amos Milburn, Bumps Blackwell, Sam Cooke, George Duke, and even the quasi-mariachi trumpeter player Herb Alpert, for whose A & M record label Watson recorded "That's What Time It Is" in 1981. He also recorded with Chuck Higgins, an example of which ("Motorhead Baby") is currently available on the CD re-release of his 1957 album *Three Hours Past Midnight*, the one which supposedly first attracted Zappa to blues guitar playing.

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Born in

business

THE INDEPENDENT • Monday 20 May 1996

BUSINESS NEWS DESK: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098

Nuclear sell-off to fall £1bn short of target

MICHAEL HARRISON

The sale of Britain's nuclear power stations, is expected to raise £1bn less than the Government had forecast. The privatisation of British Energy will realise only £1.5bn-£2bn - barely one-third of its asset value.

The flotation, which is scheduled to take place in mid-July, had been expected to bring in about £2.6bn. But the Government's advisers have been forced to reduce their estimates sharply because of an expected drop in electricity pool prices.

In March, the broking arm of

This means the proceeds from the sale will not be enough to cover the shortfall in funds needed to meet the liabilities of the ageing Magnox reactors which are being left in the public sector.

When the industry was split into two a year ago, and the sale announced of the more modern reactors, the Magnox liabilities were put at £8.5bn compared with £5.9bn already in the kitty. The Government said it would make up the shortfall - £2.6bn - from the proceeds of the flotation.

Merrill Lynch, the US

BZW, the investment bank advising the Government on the sale, estimated that British Energy would be worth £2.4bn to £2.5bn based on likely cash flows over the next five years.

But ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the company's brokers, are set to publish a report this week indicating a much lower valuation. The report is not expected to specify any price range but it will set out a dividend range which, together with pool price sensitivities, indicates a value of less than £2bn.

Merrill Lynch, the US

investment house which took over Smith New Court, is understood to take an even more pessimistic view on price.

The Hoare Govett study will be followed by a wave of research reports from banks appointed to manage the flotation including Cazenove, HSBC Investment Bank, Morgan Stanley and Paribas Capital Markets.

British Energy's capital structure is now largely in place. Its assets have been written down by £3bn to £5bn, the Government has agreed to write off almost £1bn of debt and the liabilities it will take with

it into the private sector have been set at £3.9bn.

But despite the huge debt write-down, the Government has decided that British Energy must be priced at a level which guarantees a successful sale and takes into account the possibility that pool prices will fall.

British Energy is dependent on pool prices since its eight power stations - Advanced Gas Cooled Reactors and the Sizewell B Pressurised Water Reactor are all baseload stations.

Political and regulatory risks

are regarded as less of a threat over pool prices, unlike National Power and PowerGen.

Just under one-third of the shares will be held back for the public with the remainder sold to UK and international institutions through a book-building exercise which will also set the actual share price.

The pathfinder prospectus is due out in the middle of next month after which Dr Hawley and British Energy's chairman John Robb will embark on an international roadshow to sell the offer to investors in the US, Japan and Europe.

Labour threatens end to Railtrack 'gravy train'

NIC CICUTTI

Labour warned hundreds of thousands of small investors in Railtrack last night that returns on their newly bought shares will fall far short of their expectations if the party wins the next election.

Clare Short, the party's shadow transport spokeswoman, said Labour would force Railtrack to use the proceeds from land sell-offs on improvements to its infrastructure rather than payouts to shareholders.

Ms Short's toughest warning yet on the fate of Railtrack shareholders under Labour came as more than 660,000 looked set to reap instant profits of about 15 per cent when trading begins on the stock market today.

The £1.9bn sale of the company that owns the railways' track and signalling network was heavily oversubscribed, sparking criticism from Labour that it had been privatised on the cheap.

Investors who applied for shares through the UK public offer will pay 190p for the first of two instalments, 10 pence less than applications through the international offer. The total price of each share was set yes-

terday at 390p for institutions and 380p for private investors, at the top end of expectations in the City.

The eventual number of applications for shares was about a third of the nearly two million who first registered an interest in Railtrack's privatisation, leading Labour to claim that its warnings, in prospectuses sent to all registering investors, had been backed by many potential applicants.

Ms Short said yesterday:

"You can sell anything if you sell it cheaply enough and this is a phenomenally cheap price. Railtrack owns large parcels of land in every single city centre in the land. It is a phenomenal sweetener."

Her colleague Brian Wilson, another Labour shadow transport spokesman, claimed Railtrack was actually worth £9bn.

Ms Short added that although Labour was powerless to prevent the big dividend payouts in year one that had made the share offer so attractive,

its controls over Railtrack would curb any future cash handouts.

Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, said on BBC TV's *On The Record*: "The taxpayer is not just getting £1.9bn. Railtrack is taking over more than half a billion pounds' worth of debt which will be repaid to the Government, bringing it up to about £2.6bn, which is roughly what the net asset value was the last time there was a balance sheet."

Sir George added that had the sell-off not taken place, the Government would have been faced with infrastructure spending of £1bn a year. Privatisation meant Railtrack would be freed from the Treasury constraints on the public sector and thus able to get fresh funds from the City.

And he denied the intention was to run the network down.

"Far from closing lines, we're actually opening lines... We've opened, or reopened 220 stations. The last Labour gov-

ernment closed about 600. So I'm in the business of expanding, investing, building, improving - not shrinking and cutting and closing."

The allocation of shares means that 48.3 per cent will go through the UK public offer, with a further 10.2 per cent via

the retail tender. SBC Warburg said yesterday that of the 136 million shares applied for through the retail tender, 32.5 million were personal equity plan (PEP) bids. All PEP bids were met in full, with other bidders receiving a further 12 million shares.

The average number of shares applied for was 657. The allocation for those who registered with one of the Government's 110 Share Shops will be in full up to 300 shares. This falls to 315 for 400 shares applied for and 330 for 500 shares, eventually tapering off to a maximum of 510 for 2,000 applications. No shares will be distributed to those who applied for more than 2,500. A small minority, mostly among the 13,000 who applied through the public offer but did not register with a Share Shop first, will receive no shares if they applied for more than 600.

Biotech investors await crucial results for cancer 'blockbuster'

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Investors in Britain's fledgling biotechnology face another roller-coaster ride this week with British Biotech, the nearest the industry gets to a blue-chip stock, expected to announce the results of crucial trials of its potentially blockbuster anti-cancer drug, Marimastat.

It was the euphoria surrounding the early results of these tests which, back in November, transformed the sector almost overnight from a

group of loss-making companies which few took seriously into one valued at a staggering £4.6bn.

British Biotech's shares, worth £10.43 before November's announcement, have since soared to £28.45, up 45p on Friday, valuing the company at around £1.6bn and putting it within striking distance of a place in the leading FTSE 100 index.

Marimastat is potentially one of the holy grails of pharmaceutical research. The technology, which blocks the enzymes crucial to the growth and spread

of cancers, is seen as a key breakthrough. Early test results appeared to show that, as well as slowing the rate of growth of cancers, it operates across a broad range of types of the disease, which affects 2.9m new patients annually.

This is in contrast to existing treatments such as Carboplatin and Taxol, marketed by Bristol Myers Squibb of the US, which cover two or, at best, three cancer areas. Success with Marimastat would open up a market estimated at around £7bn a year.

The number of patients involved in these so-called phase II trials have since increased from over 200 to close-

er to 500. More importantly, the 94 guinea pigs for whom relevant data was available will by now have increased significantly, although the company will not say to what level.

The main update on Tuesday will cover the US studies being conducted on Marimastat's effectiveness against pancreatic and ovarian cancers. A general briefing in London will coincide with presentations on the two US trials at the meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology in Philadelphia, the

bigs annual gathering of specialist cancer doctors and researchers.

These pains will not affect the drug's efficacy.

As well as confirming the earlier results, analysts will be seeking reassurance that the anti-cancer activity of the drug is maintained at the lower doses required to reduce side-effects.

The early tests showed that very high levels of the drug had been absorbed into the bloodstream, but four patients suffered pains in the shoulder and hand. It is hoped that reducing the dose to eliminate

even drift back a little. Much will depend on anecdotal evidence accompanying the strict scientific data, he suggests, but "this stock is being driven by sheer market lust, by greed and fear".

Whatever happens, this drug remains a very long way from the market. As Mr Plag said, phase I and phase II drug trials "are all about the company convincing itself that the drug is worth continuing with and phase III is all about convincing the regulators, who can be a much tougher proposition."

UK urges OECD study on corporate tax breaks

DIANE COYLE

Economics Editor

The Government will call this week for the industrialised countries to assess whether the competition to attract footloose multinational businesses through favourable taxation is harmful.

It will propose that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the rich countries' think tank which holds its annual meeting in Paris this week, should launch a wide study of how tax systems in different countries affect international investment flows. The study, which would take at least 12 months to complete, could form the basis for a new agreement on international taxation which would prevent the tax system being used deliberately to lure investors.

Britain will also push for a

new round of international trade liberalisation, issuing a call for global free trade by the year 2020.

Although other states are likely to agree to the tax study, the call for free trade is expected to meet some resistance as existing negotiations on areas such as telecommunications and audio-visual trade have run into the sand.

The World Trade Organisation itself, the multi-lateral body which would have to lead a new negotiating round, will resist taking on such a challenge before it has resolved its own teething troubles and wrapped up issues left over from the Uruguay Round of negotiations.

The British move follows a similar call by Sir Leon Brittan, the EU's trade supremo. However, some also see it as an attempt to deflect demands by some countries, led by France

and the US, to write minimum social standards into trade agreements. This row, which emerged at the Group of Seven jobs summit in Lille last month, will resurface at the OECD's élégant chateau headquarters in Paris this week.

Those in favour of so-called social clauses argue that they are an effective way to outlaw practices such as bonded and child labour which allow some developing countries to produce unfairly cheap goods.

Britain, along with Japan and Germany, sees increasing prosperity in the Third World - which depends on trade - as the solution to unacceptable practices.

The French and Americans, however, want to proposals on social clauses to the first annual meeting of the World Trade Organisation. This will be held in Singapore in December.

Barclays enlists hi-tech helper to vet borrowers

PETER RODGERS

Business Editor

Barclays has completed the installation of a new computerised corporate lending system that it claims will prevent a repeat of the sudden catastrophic emergence of bad debts that hit the bank after the last recession.

The system, called Lending Advisor (sic), now covers 1,500 managers in 350 branches and regional offices and 60,000 business customers ranging in turnover from £500,000 to large companies, though not the really big multinationals.

David Weymouth, director of corporate services, said: "In the late 1980s nobody knew they were hitting an iceberg until they smashed into it and started to sink. With this you can see the iceberg much earlier. There is an early warning capability in this that is very important."

The system helps bank managers assess the creditworthiness of their customers by loading financial information about the company on to the computer, which compares the business to its peers and flags possible areas of concern thrown up by the figures.

It also projects the company's financial performance and shows the impact of changing business plans on cash needs.

Managers input their own views on the company, the industry in which it operates, its management, their performance records and even their ethics. The system highlights any conflicts between this judgemental information and the financial data.

The immediate objective of the system is to speed up lending decisions to companies and make them more consistent around the bank.

Mr

Weymouth denied that the computer system automated corporate lending in the same way as credit scoring for personal loans. Decisions are still taken by managers and the computer does not make recommendations about whether to make a loan, how much it should cost or what security should be put up.

But because of the improvements in credit analysis brought in by the new system, many more decisions can be taken at branch and regional office level than in the past.

Mr Weymouth said: "Managers will have considerably more autonomy so they will be allowed to make faster decisions." Where the computer analysis shows borrowers are in the good risk to medium risk range, then decisions will be taken at lower levels in the bank.

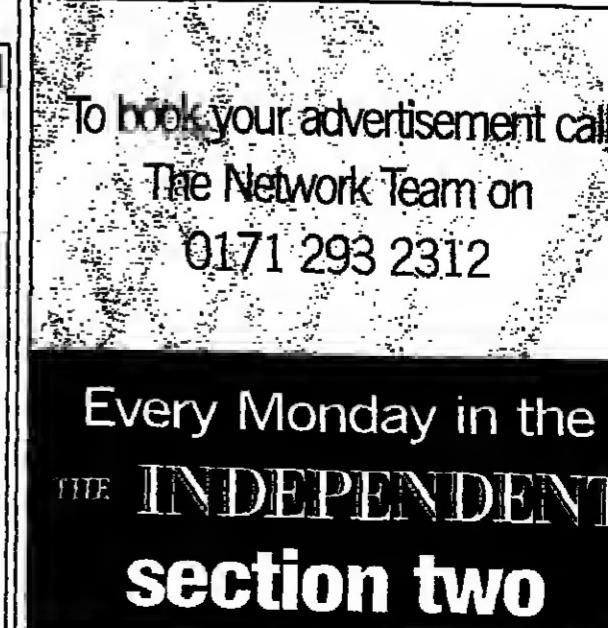
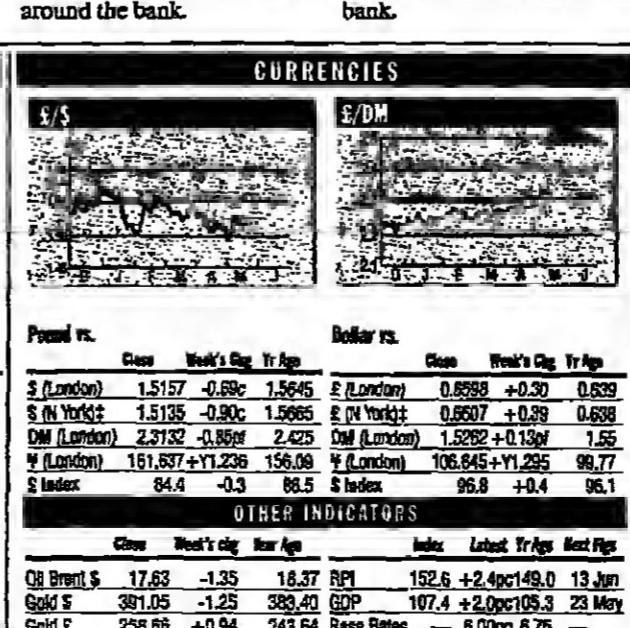
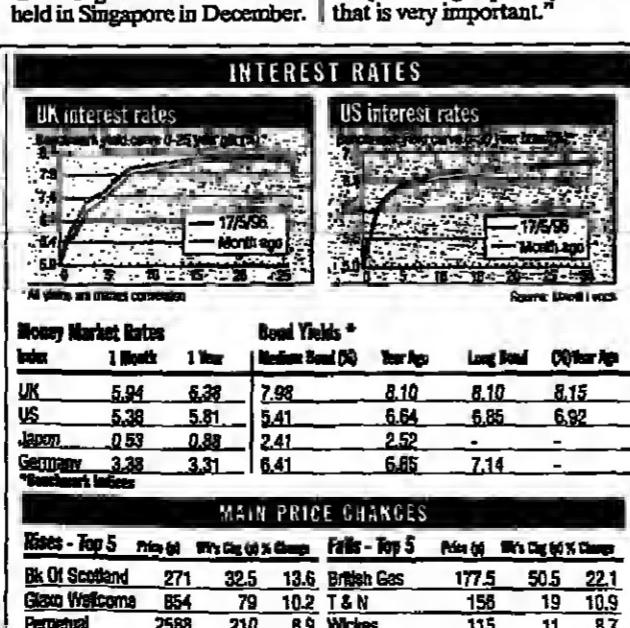
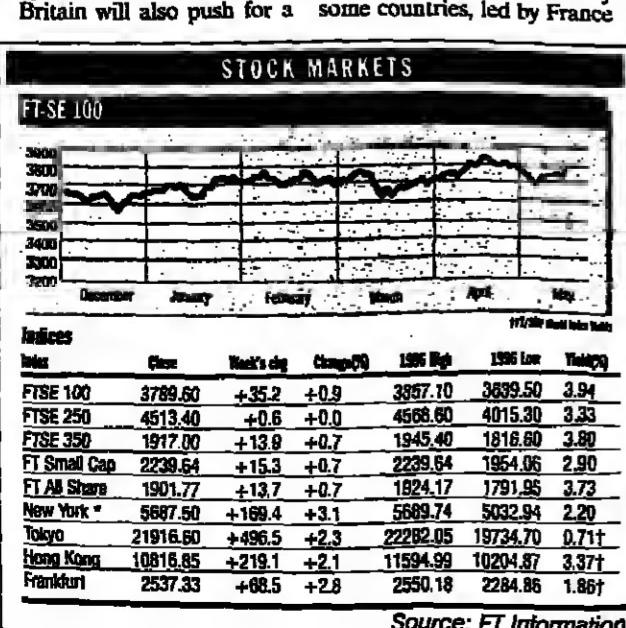
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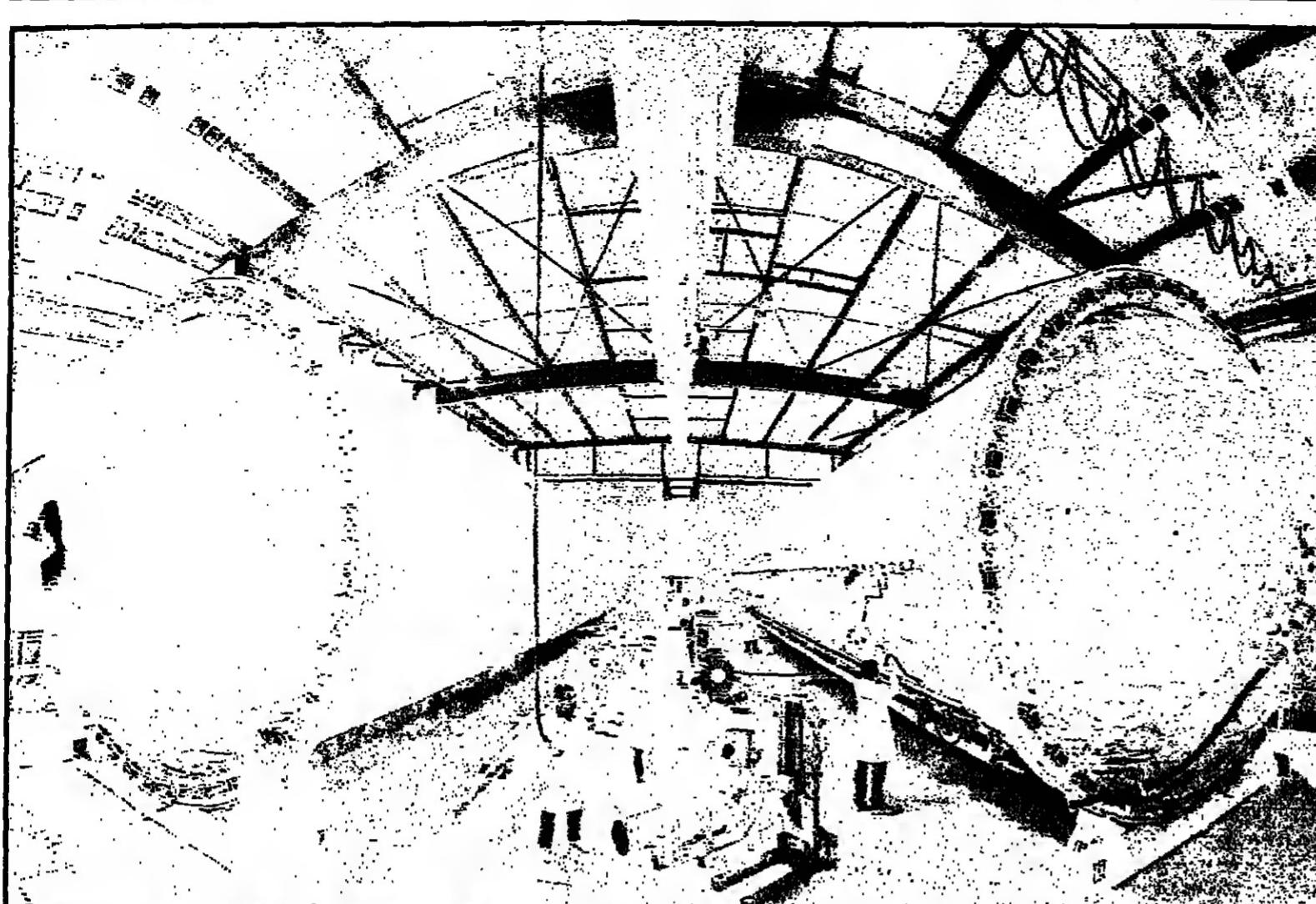
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JULY 1996



The main fuel tanks for two Ariane 5 rockets under construction in France.

Photograph: David Parker for ESA/Science Photo Library

Boost to the future?

The new rocket Ariane 5 lifts off next week. On it will ride the hopes of the entire European space industry, writes Peter Bond

At the end of this month, the largest rocket ever built in western Europe, the European Space Agency's new Ariane 5 launcher will make its maiden flight. Riding on the giant booster will be more than 10 years of engineering development and \$7bn of investment, not to mention the future of the European space industry for the next 15 to 20 years.

Twenty years ago, most of the Western world's satellites were lifted into orbit by American rockets. Today, this domineering position has been taken over by the European Ariane 4, but competition is once again bottling up. Hence the tremendous significance of next week's maiden flight.

The Ariane 5 programme dates back to 1985 when the European Space Agency's ministerial council - without the backing of the UK government - gave the go-ahead to preliminary studies for a new rocket which would meet predicted demand for the late 1990s and lead Europe into the 21st century ahead of its competitors.

Since then, between 6,000 and 10,000 employees at 150 European companies - mainly in France, Germany and Italy - have been working full-time on the new launcher. Reluctantly recognising its mistake in virtually ignoring one of the most commercially viable space projects in Europe, the UK government has recently agreed to contribute the modest sum of \$4.3m to the programme over the next four years - "Enough to get the flag on the side of the rocket," said one disillusioned commentator.

Ariane 5's main task will be

to carry large communications satellites into geostationary orbit above the equator. Officials of the European Space Agency, which paid for its development, and of Ariane-space, the private company that operates and markets the rockets, believe size will be a major factor in meeting this requirement.

Standing more than 50m tall and weighing 750 tonnes at lift-off, the newcomer will be able to carry nearly 20 tonnes into low Earth orbit. However, on most missions it will be required to lift one communications satellite weighing 6.8 tonnes or two with a total mass of 5.9 tonnes into geostationary orbit. 36,000km above the equator.

Most of the awesome power required to carry such heavy payloads comes from two solid-fuel rocket boosters which stand like stilts on either side of the rocket. Standing 30m tall, they are 10 times larger than any solid-fuel motors previously made in Europe.

Just as important is the newly developed first-stage Vulcan rocket motor, mainly built by France and Germany. Burning 1 tonne of super-cooled liquid hydrogen and oxygen every four seconds, this engine will propel payloads to a height of 140km before a much smaller German-built second-stage motor completes the final insertion into orbit.

ESA's programme manager, Jacques Durand, is confident

that the new booster will be able to fight off its rivals.

"Back in 1987, we had a number of objectives. First, to increase performance. This now appears right because the mass of satellites has increased. Then we had the objective of making it even more reliable than Ariane 4. This is very important in international competition and attracts customers' interest. Thirdly, in the production phase, Ariane 5 will be 10 per cent less costly than Ariane 4. All of these factors will place Europe in a good position to face the competition."

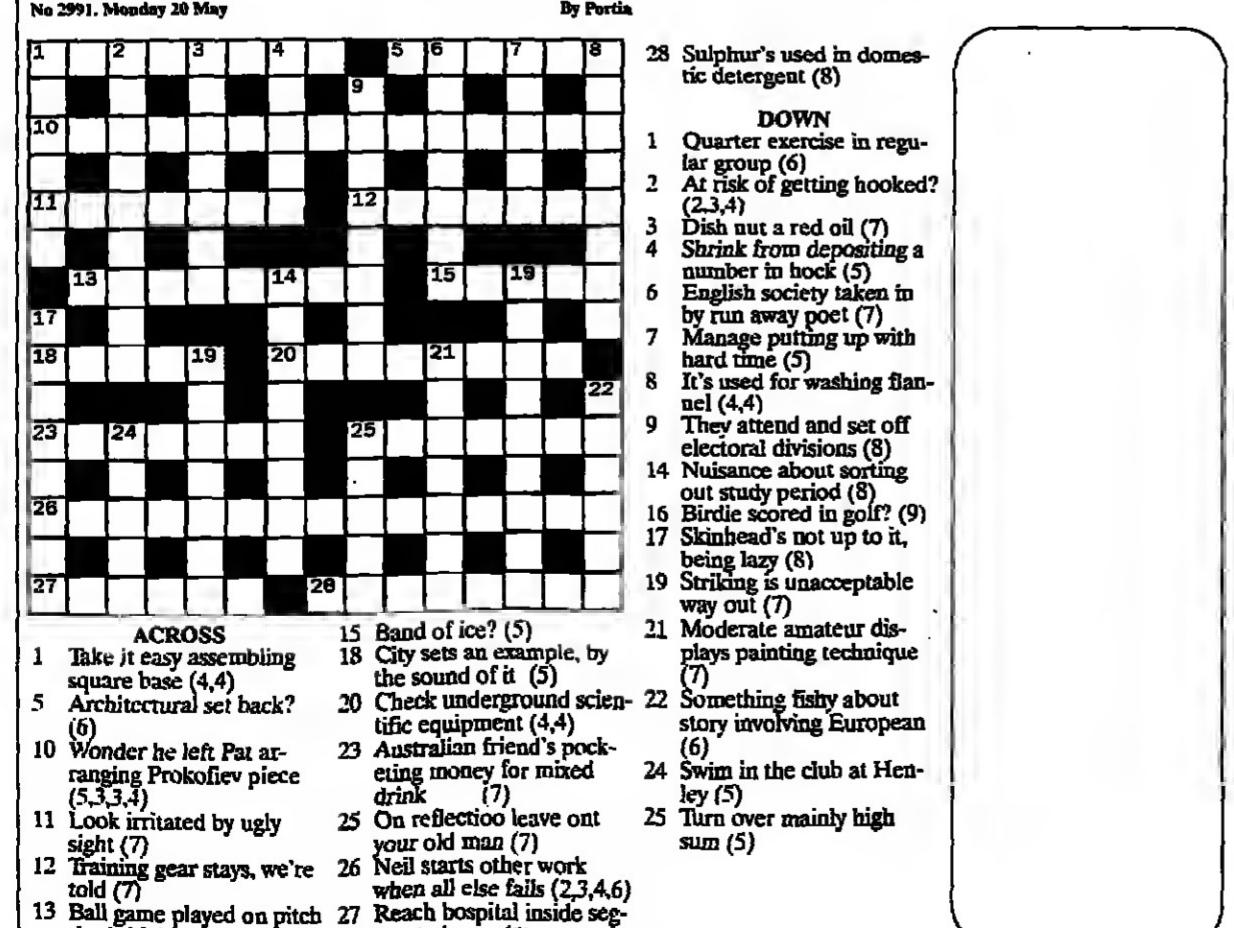
The newcomer's first two launches are regarded as test flights. On its maiden flight, Ariane 5 will be carrying four identical science satellites, known as Cluster. Together with the recently launched SOHO satellite, they will make up ESA's contribution to the International Solar-Terrestrial Science Programme.

Flying in formation above the Earth's poles, Cluster will study how charged particles ejected by the Sun interact with the Earth's magnetic field.

For Ariane 5's second flight in October, ESA is offering a cut-price launch of a commercial satellite. Also on board will be an amateur communications satellite and a mock-up of a re-entry capsule which will carry the agency's hopes of one day developing a manned spacecraft.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

By Portia



Edited by
Tom Wilkie

Wrongful conviction that could cost lives

BSE might never have happened if we had not misjudged a solvent, says John Emsley

Paint stripper very nearly prevented the British epidemic of mad cow disease and the subsequent panic that people may have contracted brain disease from eating beef products contaminated with the causative agent of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy. Chemists in Britain had discovered that the solvent dichloromethane (DCM) was ideal for extracting fat from the so-called greaves - animal offal that has been pulped and heated under pressure at 120°C. When the greaves have been defatted, the high-protein residue is sold as cattle feed.

The fat used to be removed from greaves with either hexane, a highly flammable solvent, or trichlorethylene, which was safer but contaminated the product. In the early 1980s, the rendering industry had already built a pilot plant using DCM as the solvent. It was producing high-grade fat and cattle cake, free of the BSE agent. However, before the process could be scaled up, report from the US Environmental Protection Agency reported that DCM caused cancer in mice. British firms that processed abattoir waste abandoned the new solvent, and went over to a non-solvent process instead. This used lower rendering temperatures, and pressed the greaves to extract the fat. Unfortunately, as we now know, the BSE agent survived the new treatment.

Meanwhile, ESA is already working towards a still more powerful version of Ariane 5. By the year 2003, the agency will have spent a further \$2.6bn on upgrading the rocket so that it will be capable of lifting 7.4 tonnes into orbit. "It should be operating for at least another 20 years," says Jacques Durand. "After 2003 we will be carrying out parallel work on a reusable launcher and further evolution of Ariane 5."

ESA still intends to play a significant role in the \$30bn project to assemble a giant international space station between 1997 and 2002. This includes using Ariane 5 to deliver an automated cargo vehicle to the station.

DCM was also attacked from another quarter: environmentalists accused it of damaging the earth's atmosphere because, like CFCs, it contains ozone-depleting chlorine atoms. Throughout these scares DCM continued to be the active ingredient in DIY paint strippers. Ironically, research has since shown that DCM does not cause cancer in humans, nor does it damage the ozone layer.

DCM, also known by its older name of methylene chloride, is a clear, volatile, non-flammable, colourless liquid with a not unpleasant odour. It has the molecular formula CH_2Cl_2 , with two hydrogens and two chlorines attached to a carbon atom. DCM has a remarkable ability to penetrate

some is converted to carbon monoxide and this could affect people with a heart condition. Splashes of DCM on the skin can be alarmingly painful, but the effect soon wears off if the affected area is bathed with water, and there is no permanent damage.

More alarming was the development of cancers by mice who were exposed to high levels of vapour. Yet research on rats and hamsters showed no increased risk of cancer, and epidemiological studies on 6,000 people who had worked with the solvent over many years showed no increased susceptibility either.

Dr Trevor Green, senior scientist at Zeneca's Central Toxicology Laboratory at Macclesfield, Cheshire, has been researching DCM for 10 years and believes there is a scientific explanation for the special sensitivity of mice: "They have high levels of an enzyme, glutathione, in the nucleus of each cell which can activate the DCM to form a metabolite. This mutates the cell's DNA and triggers off cancer." Although rats, hamsters and humans also have this enzyme it is not located in the cell's nucleus and so does not act as a carcinogen.

There are no natural sources of DCM, apart from small amounts given off by erupting volcanoes, and the current atmospheric level of 0.00005 ppm can be attributed almost entirely to human activity. Even if more is manufactured, this level is unlikely to rise because DCM is destroyed by light and oxygen, and has a life-span of only nine months in air. It is no threat to the ozone layer, nor does it cause photochemical smog over cities, and the Department of the Environment concludes that it has little effect as a greenhouse gas.

The earlier conviction of DCM as a dangerous pollutant now looks to have been a miscarriage of justice. Indeed, had it not been wrongly convicted, it might have prevented BSE in Britain, thus saving the British beef industry and, it may yet turn out, human lives.

Dr John Emsley is science writer in residence at Imperial College, London.

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Questionnaire

Please complete in block capitals

1. Mr Mrs Ms

Surname: _____

First Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

I am seriously interested in meeting someone through Dateline.

Education O levels / GCSE's A levels

Further Education University

Technical Qualification

Other: _____

3. Your personal details

Height: _____

Build: slight medium large

Hair colour: _____

Dress/Looks: casual fashionable

elegant sporty

4. Your work

Present job: _____

Self-employed employed

civil servant manual worker

part-time not working

unemployed retired

5. Your Personality

Affectionate Fashionable

Serious Practical

Considerate Conventional

Shy Reliable

Romantic Adventurous

2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single Divorced

Widowed Separated

Religion: _____

Age: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Do you have children of your own?

Yes No

If yes, how many live with you? _____

6. How would people who know you best describe you?

always ready for a joke

somewhat dreamy

never has problems

takes life a bit too seriously

not easily upset

always active

charity

if yes, how many live with you? _____

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Don't mind

9. Which of the three pictures do you prefer? (tick the box)

John Wilkes